IS THIS WEEK YOUR CHANCE TO SAY YES?
see special section

BUSINESS / B3-1

RP property boom: Sector shows no signs of cooling down

LIFESTYLE / F3

Top classical artists in concert to raise funds for rescue dogs

ACROSS / A20

Bauang declares state of calamity over rabies cases

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS

Monday, September 17, 2007 ★★ 12 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 281 P18

'Lola' sends off Marian images to poor villages

By TJ Burgonio

AT 93, ASUNCION LEETAI PAVIA DOES NOT show signs of slowing down. She prays the rosary twice a day, reads inspirational books and watches TV Mass at night.

Unknown to many, save for her family

'LOLA' SENDS/ A18

VIVA LA VIRGEN! Thousands of devotees join the procession for Our Lady of Peñafrancia, patroness of Bicolandia, before the fluvial parade in Naga City.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/ INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Erap open to amnesty

But he wants to read 'fine print' of proposal first

By Christian V. Esguerra and Kristine L. Alave

CONVICTED FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA is open to the idea of being granted amnesty, but he wants to see the "fine print" of any such proposal first and wants it clear that acceptance does not signify guilt, a close ally said yesterday.

Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, spokesperson of Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, said Estrada considered amnesty a logical recourse given what he called the "political decision" handed down by the Sandiganbayan which convicted him of plunder in a P4.1-billion case.

"The President (Estrada) is open to the idea of amnesty," Rodriguez told the INQUIRER, recalling their 15-minute phone conversation on Saturday night. "But he has to see the fine print of the proposal."

Rodriguez said he and Estrada talked after the ex-President's legal team came to his Tanay rest house, where the antigraft court had ordered Estrada detained until further notice.

Rodriguez said the decision of the team was to file a motion for reconsideration.

Estrada particularly wanted to study the details of the "all-encompassing" amnesty

ERAP / A19

Coconuts to fuel growth in Pacific

MAJURO, MARSHALL ISlands—The first thing you notice about a diesel engine running on coconut oil is the smell.

"It smells sweet. You can put your nose right up to the exhaust," says Witon Barry, assistant manager of the Tobolar Copra processing plant in the Marshall Islands capital of Majuro.

Smelling just like coconut biscuits straight out of the oven, the exhaust is a big improvement on an old diesel engine belching acrid black smoke.

All over the Pacific, power authorities, private companies and entrepreneurs have been experimenting with coconut oil as an alternative to diesel fuel for vehicles, power generators and even ships.

"The idea goes right the way back to Mr. Rudolf Diesel. He invented the combustion engine to use peanut oil," says Jerry Kramer, chief executive of Pacific International Inc., a company pioneering the use of coconut oil in the Marshall Islands.

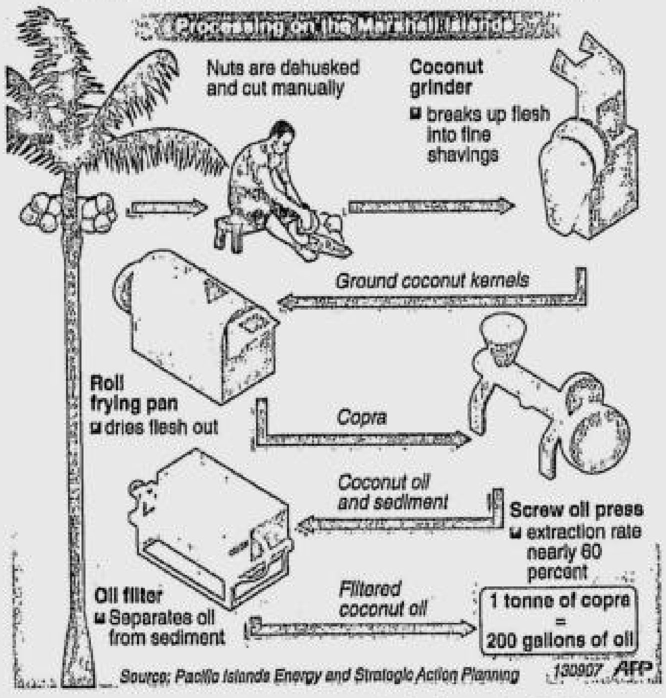
The use of coconut oil received a boost in the last couple of years as oil prices hit record highs and coconut oil fell to around $550 per ton in the volatile world commodity markets.

Coconut trees are found ev-

COCONUTS/ A18

Coconut power

Six to 10 coconuts can produce a litre of oil


Processing on the Marshall Islands
Nuts are dehusked and cut manually
Coconut grinder
breaks up flesh into fine shavings
Ground coconut kernels
Roll frying pan
dries flesh out
Copra
Coconut oil and sediment
Screw oil press
extraction rate nearly 60 percent
Oil filter
Separates oil from sediment
Filtered coconut oil
1 tonne of copra = 200 gallons of oil

Source: Pacific Islands Energy and Strategic Action Planning 130907 AFP

Senate millionaires club: Villar is richest

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar is the richest senator while Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV is the poorest.

Based on his latest statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN), Villar, the Tondo boy who made good selling low-cost houses, listed his net worth as P921.4 million, up less than 1 percent from the P915.6 million he declared in 2006.

Villar, who ranked No. 24 in Forbes Asia's 40 richest Filipinos with a $110-million fortune, accounted for 47

SENATE/ A12

GMA men seen to snub 'Hello Garci' quiz today

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño

THE SENATE WILL RESUME ITS "Hello Garci" investigation today, with former military intelligence agent Vidal Doble Jr. as the lone witness.

But other witnesses, notably government and military officials, are expected to snub the hearing on the wiretapped conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which they allegedly talked about manipulating the 2004 presidential election.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said the Senate had yet to receive responses from the personalities who were invited to attend the hearing to shed light on "Project: Lighthouse," the alleged wiretapping operation conducted by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) during the 2004 elections.

GMA MEN/ A18

Businessmen still cautious after verdict

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE FINANCIAL MARKETS have reacted to former President Joseph Estrada's conviction for plunder with enormous relief amid the calm public acceptance of the antigraft court's verdict that sentenced him to life.

The markets rallied soon after the Sandiganbayan handed down its historic verdict on Wednesday. The peso rebounded to 46.71 to the US dollar, a sharp gain from the previous day's 47.12.

Stock prices closed 1.21 percent higher on Wednesday, recovering from a two-day slump. The calm resolution of the six-year trial was not the singular factor that sparked the rebound. The rally was a positive response to the court decision and was helped by the prospects of a reduction this week by the US Federal Reserve of its benchmark interest rate.

That means that the markets'

BUSINESSMEN/ A19

PATI SA MUNTI MADAMI KANG FANS!

100 convicts want to serve Erap's term

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHEN JOSEPH ESTRADA spared some 100 death convicts from execution while he was President, little did he know his act of mercy would bring him good karma—in his own time of trouble.

Those erstwhile death convicts, now serving life sentences at the New Bilibid Prisons either for murder, rape or some other heinous crime, have written a letter expressing their

100 CONVICTS/ A19

MILF offers to pull out forces in Basilan, Sulu

IN A GESTURE OF GOODWILL ahead of an anticipated resumption of peace talks, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday announced that it had offered to abandon its strongholds in Basilan and Sulu so the military could go after Abu Sayyaf bandits.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said over local radio the rebels would move out of their strongholds in Basilan and Sulu "to give way to a big military offensive" against Abu Sayyaf militants.

"We are prepared to leave the areas, on certain considerations, including the security and subsistence of the families of our fighters," Kabalu said. "We want to apply that to avoid misencounters" with the military, he added.

Kabalu said the offer to temporarily vacate their camps was a "sign of sincerity and cooperation so that the government could focus on the law-

MILF OFFERS/ A12

MILF rebels raise their weapons during a drill in Datu Sinsuat town in Maguindanao. JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

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Second
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will continue to experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: RHEA BLANCAS, PDI RESEARCH/09/16/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

SIGE NA NGA NG MATAPOS NA LAHAT NG MGA KASONG YAN

EZ2

22 2

(In exact order)

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening

6 6 8 | 1 7 4

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

2 20 31 32 33 46

₱20,933,238.60

DOJ to focus on scams, killings

Acting Secretary Devanadera to also look into old, urgent cases

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL GIVE PRIority to cases involving investment scams and extrajudicial killings, including those of members of the media, under the watch of acting Secretary Agnes Devanadera.

Devanadera, who is also the Solicitor General, said she would work to decrease the backlog of cases at the DOJ and had begun an inventory of the oldest and most urgent cases finally would be disposed of.

Devanadera is at the helm of the DOJ in the absence of Secretary Raul Gonzalez who is on medical leave.

Devanadera said Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño had grouped the cases according to type to make it easier to see which cases should be taken care of first.

"The way I see it now, because of the volume [of cases] after seeing the inventory, I think we have to move these cases and address the more urgent ones and the old ones regardless of the nature of the cases," she said.

Devanadera said that focusing on investment and pyramiding scams was important given the number of people that have been victimized.

"These are people who have invested their life savings. I'm hoping that other people will not victimize more and more of our countrymen. You know [those] from the provinces, they are really vulnerable. It's usually the retirement pay of teachers, of soldiers [that is affected]," she said.

Among the recent investment scams was one involving foreign exchange trading firm Performance Investment Products Corp. (PIPC) which allegedly defrauded its clients of millions of dollars, and Francswiss, an Internet-based pyramiding scheme.

Extrajudicial and media killings, on the other hand, are a fairly recent concern, with the government, the military and law enforcers taken to task by critics for failing to solve the killings.

The Supreme Court even organized a multisectoral summit to come up with solutions to address the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

The human rights group Karapatan has said that more than 800 people have been killed—allegedly by security forces—since 2001. More than 365 of the victims were left-wing activists, it said. At least 183 cases of involuntary disappearances had also been recorded.

Since 2001, 33 journalists have also been killed.

Devanadera, meanwhile, said she would not reduce the number of people working at the DOJ.

"I'm not here to fire, but I'm here to hire," she said.

Mendoza tells cadets NBN deal 'all right, sir!'

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—TRANSportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza assured cadets of the Philippine Military Academy that the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project was "on the level," when he declared "All right, sir!" during a closed-door testimonial luncheon with PMA cadets on Saturday.

"All right, sir!" is a cadet salutation that tells a PMA "mistah" (classmate) that what a fellow cadet is saying is the absolute truth, Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, explained on Sunday.

Mendoza did not read his prepared speech. Instead, he showed the cadets a copy of a national newspaper [which had described Mendoza as the official who had kept mum about the scandal], Maligalig said.

"He told the cadets that it would be okay to ask him 'All right, sir?' because he would respond in the affirmative," Maligalig said. Mendoza is a member of PMA Class '69.

It was the same salutation that Sen. Panfilo Lacson, also a PMA alumnus, used to challenge the credibility of then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes at the height of the controversy surrounding the alleged misuse of intelligence funds.

But Reyes, another PMA alumnus, did not reply to the challenge and asserted that he remained "under oath."

"All right, sir!" is part of the interaction among PMA alumni who are obliged to adhere to the PMA honor system.

The PMA honor code forbids cadets from lying, cheating or stealing, and does not approve of a cadet or an alumnus who tolerates violators.

Mendoza proffered the salutation after describing the function of a national broadband network in governance, Maligalig told the INQUIRER.

Maligalig said the cadets were aware of the NBN controversy.

But he said the real lesson "this scandal has taught them is that the honor system can remain part of their lives 30 years into their careers."

Maligalig said Mendoza's "All right, sir!" salutation proved this.

Mendoza had been invited to attend a parade in his honor, even before the NBN scandal broke out, Maligalig said.

But he accepted the invitation only this week because it coincided with a national forum of the Department of Transportation and Communications' regional executives at Camp John Hay here, he said.

WHAT'S INSIDE

JONAS CASE could go up to SC, says Esperon

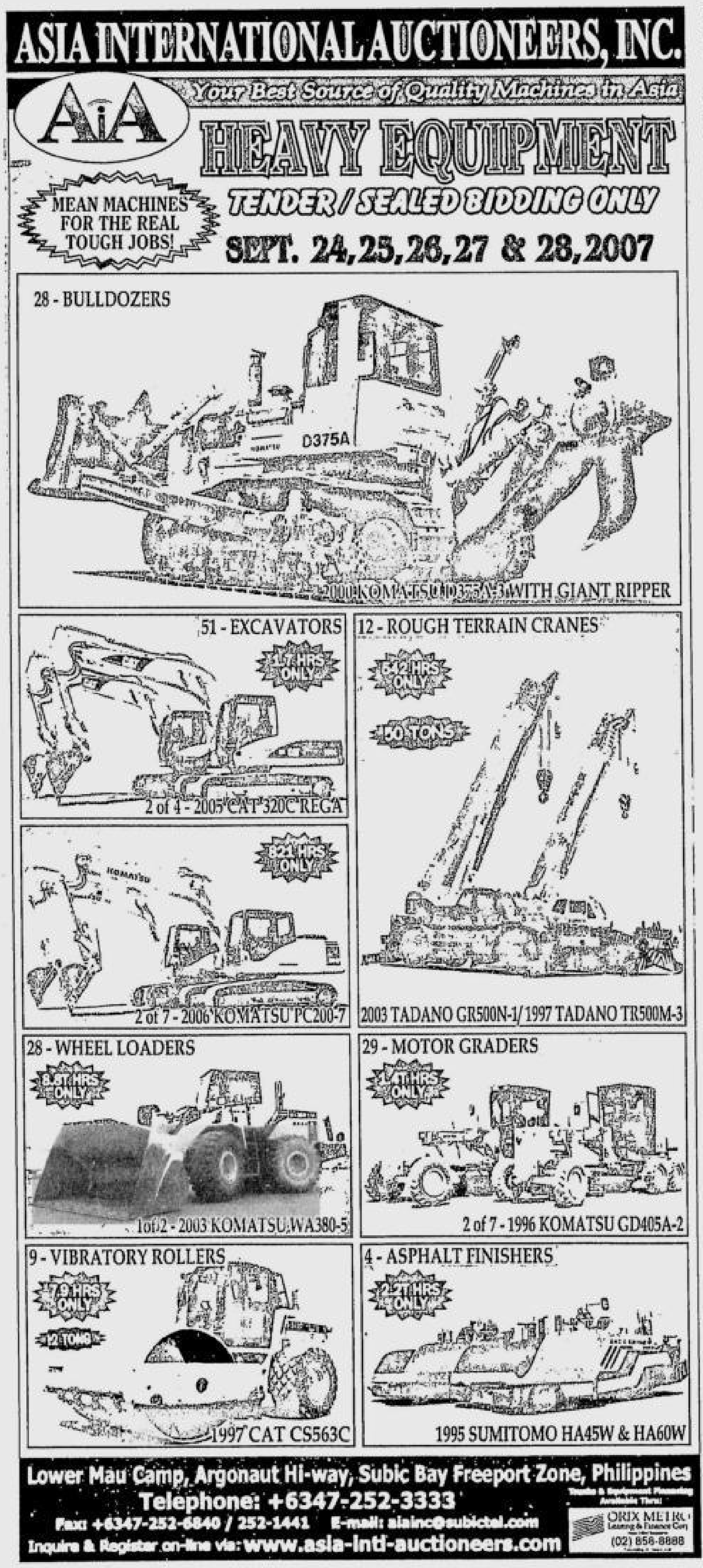
/A4

PRISONERS get 'catered' food at national penitentiary

/A6

ARMM PUPILS score lowest in achievement test

/A8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Aiko Finally Reveals The Secret To Her Weight-Loss

She was one of Philippine cinema's favorite young sweethearts who eventually evolved into a more accomplished, mature actress – and then some. Actress. Mother. Public Official. Aiko Melendez has assumed many roles not only in front of the cameras, but also under the watchful eyes (and sometimes inevitable scrutiny) of the public. One of the visible "changes" in Aiko was her transformation from being naturally slim to being overweight. From a 28-inch waistline, she went up to a 37, something she didn't think would happen.

"I've been slim almost half of my life," Aiko shares. "I was athletic, I used to swim. I never thought I'd end up gaining weight." How did she end up gaining all the excess weight? "I think it started with my pregnancy," Aiko recalls. "*Kasi* during my first pregnancy, I had this notion that I could eat anything I wanted because I was eating 'for two.' So I spoiled myself. And I ended up gaining a drastic amount of weight! Imagine, I even went up to a 37-inch waistline!"

Used to being slim, Aiko was unprepared for the emotional toll her weight gain would take on her. "I felt really bad," she remembers. "When I went to the mall, people would just come up to me and say, '*Aiko, anong nangyari? Bakit ang taba mo na ngayon?*' and '*Ang ganda ng mukha mo kaya lang ang taba mo,*' which was pretty harsh. I really lost my self-confidence. I felt like a *losyang*. I couldn't even dress well. When you're fat, limited *ang* clothes, *mo*."

She was desperate to lose the weight – fast. However, this meant resorting to rash decisions in finding weight-loss solutions. "I tried every diet there is!" Aiko recalls. "South Beach, After 6, Atkins – you name it, I've tried it! But when I lost a bit of weight, I had a tendency to be lax. So I'd end up eating ang gaining weight again. I also tried diet pills, but I ended up getting hospitalized because of it. I felt *na parang nabibingi ako*. I was getting palpitations and I was becoming irritable. I also had problems with my blood circulation."

Eventually she thought she found a solution in liposuction. "I had liposuctions done in various parts of the body – my arms, my back, my legs, my tummy – basically everywhere. And yeah, you do lose the weight. But if you don't watch your diet or exercise and regain the weight again, it becomes double, even triple of what you lost before. What's more, I was told you can only have at least 3 lipo's in your lifetime. 'Cause it can affect your heart, your blood and the anesthesia used can even affect your memory! Plus when I gained weight again, I noticed *lumilipat yung taba* in different parts of the body. I wasn't proportioned."

She became hopeful when she saw close friend Dawn Zulueta's transformation from gaining post-pregnancy weight to slimming down to a body even sexier than what she had prior to the weight gain! Dawn went from 146 to an amazing 126 lbs. thanks to religiously committing to Marie France treatments.

"Seeing how Marie France worked for Dawn inspired me," Aiko says. "Achieving my ideal weight has become very important. I was about 181 lbs. when I first came to Marie France. The treatments were working and I saw how I was slowly but surely losing the pounds. However, after a few months of treatment, I had to stop because of elections where I ran for Quezon City Councilor. The stress from that also made me lose a couple of pounds. Then after that, I went straight back to Marie France to continue my program. In two months, I lost 17 lbs.! As of now, I'm already 148 lbs.! I'm still a work in progress, though. I'm hoping to reach my ideal weight *na mga* 130 to 135 lbs."

Aiko has nothing but raves for the Marie France treatments: "With Marie France *kasi*, it's safe. There are no medications, no crazy dieting, no surgery. It's purely machines working on your body. You just lie down and relax! My top 3 favorite treatments are Endermologie, Velasmooth and Physique."

Friends who have seen her transformation have encouraging reactions. "They tell me, '*Ang laki na ng pinayat mo! Anong ginagawa mo?*' and I tell them I do Marie France treatments. I'm very pleased with the results. Plus I feel healthier too! So a huge thanks to Marie France for all the nice comments I've been getting. But I'm not done yet! Just you wait...I'm going to get even slimmer," Aiko promises confidently.

* * *

Like Aiko, you can also lose the excess weight the healthy, easy, non-surgical way. Call Marie France today at 894-BODY (2639); Cebu (032) 233-7637; Pampanga (045) 961-2981 for a free consultation.

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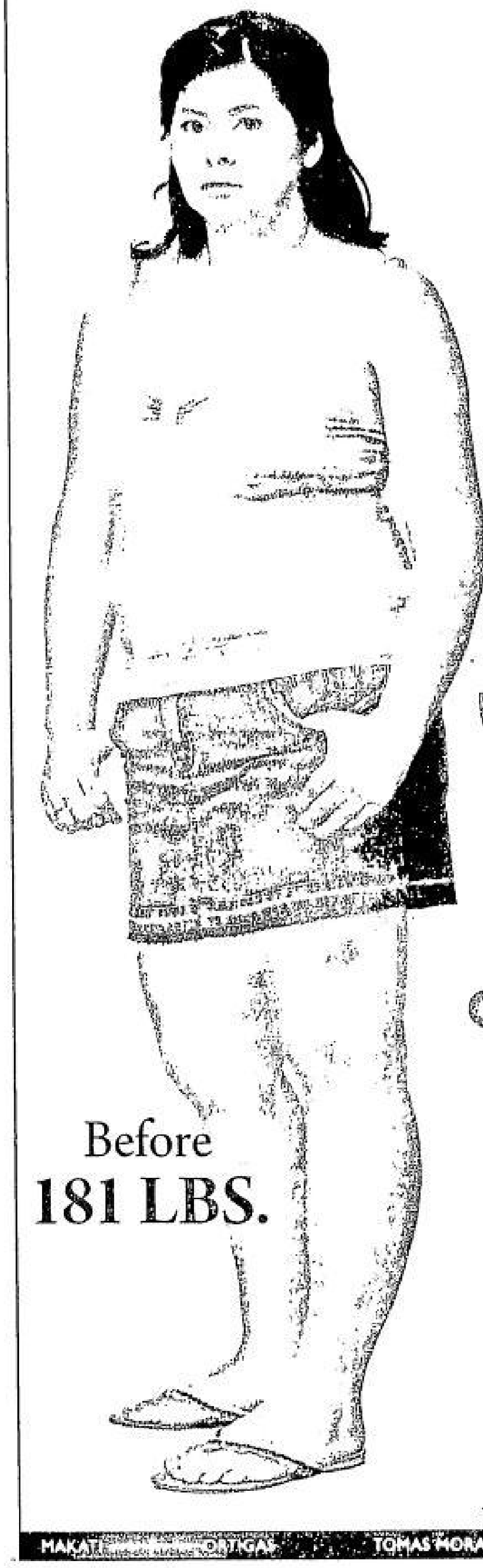

Before
181 LBS.

marie france

So far...
148 LBS.

Aiko: I Went From a 37 to a 32-Inch Waistline!

"I never thought I'd end up being overweight. I used to be slimmer in my younger years. When I gained weight and went up to a 37-inch waistline, my life changed. I started losing acting projects. People would come up to me and tell me outright that I was fat. It really made me lose my confidence! I had liposuction done but when I gained excess weight again, it was triple of what I lost before. As for diets – you name it, I've tried it! I just kept losing and gaining again. Then Dawn (Zulueta), who's a close friend, recommended Marie France. I was encouraged by her weight-loss success story. I started going regularly and so far I've already slimmed down to a 32-inch waistline! I'm still a work in progress but so far I feel better because I know I look slimmer and healthier!"

- Aiko Melendez
Actress and Public Official

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AFP: Jonas case may go all the way up to SC

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMED FORCES of the Philippines is prepared to fight all the way to the Supreme Court attempts by the family of Jonas Burgos to secure its investigation report on how the license plate of an impounded jeep ended up on the vehicle used in his kidnapping, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said.

"The final arbiter here could be the Supreme Court, with all my respect to the lower courts," the AFP chief of staff told the INQUIRER in an interview on Friday.

Esperon also admitted that when he announced that he would release the report in compliance with an order of the Court of Appeals, he was unaware that government lawyers were poised to file a motion for reconsideration.

A week after the announcement that elated Burgos' mother Edita, Esperon said the AFP would "exhaust all legal avenues" not to have to release the report.

Held in contempt

"In the end, if the court orders us to release the report, we will release it," Esperon said.

The leftist Kilusang Mambubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said that Esperon should be held in contempt if he continued to refuse to release the report despite an order from the appeals court.

"He was the one who said that they would comply with the court order, now they are backing out. He should be held responsible for this and for prolonging the agony of Jonas Burgos' family and friends," Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general, said in a statement yesterday.

On Sept. 7, Esperon said he would release the report as ordered by the Court of Appeals, after it rejected the Solicitor General's petition to quash the subpoena for the document.

A week later, Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Tang said she had explained to Esperon that all legal remedies should first be exhausted before the military would release the report.

Subpoenaed

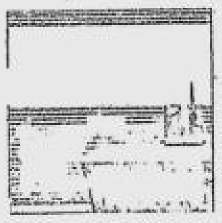
The family of Burgos has been trying to get a copy of the AFP Provost Marshall's investigation report on the loss of license plate TAB-194 that was on a jeep in the custody of the 56th Infantry Battalion in Bulacan.

The license plate was spotted on one of the vehicles used by the abductors of Burgos, 36, son of the late newspaper publisher and press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos.

The military report was subpoenaed as part of the hearing on the petition for writ of habeas corpus filed by Edita Burgos, who has accused the military of being involved in the kidnapping.

Jonas Burgos, an agriculturist, was actively training peasant farmers on the use of organic fertilizer when he was abducted on April 28 from the Ever Gotesco mall in Fairview, Quezon City.

But police have said Burgos was a political officer of the communist New People's Army who was kidnapped by his own comrades.



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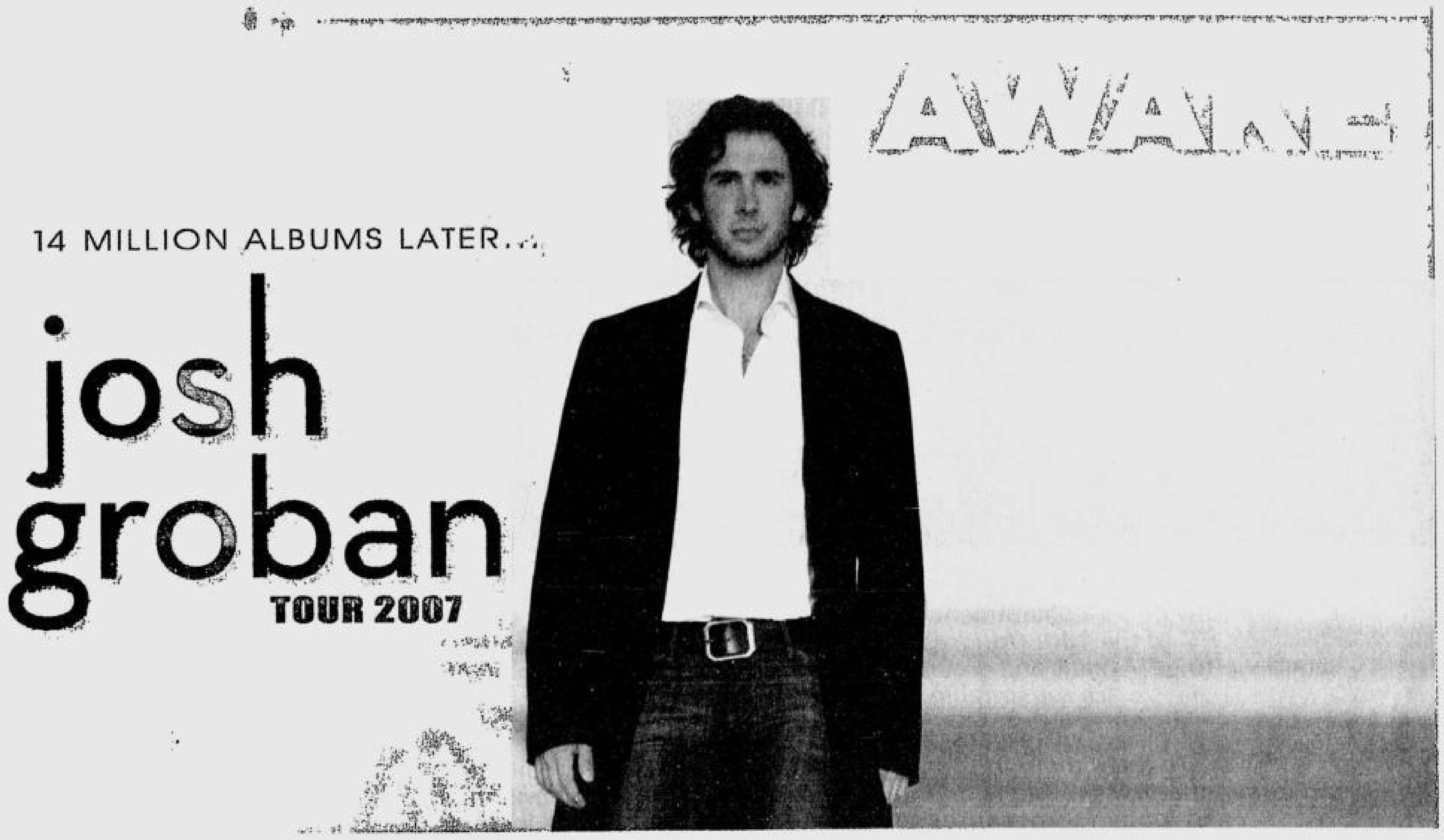

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What's cooking? Caterer serves up 'adobe' at Bilibid

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE New Bilibid Prisons?

At the congressional hearing on the proposed 2008 national budget last week, Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) Director Ricardo Dapat made a stunning revelation: Prisoners' meals in the country's premier prison facility were now being "catered."

"We have a catering service now," he told the incredulous lawmakers, who took it as a joke.

The congressmen were quizzing Dapat on the Department of Justice's proposed P12.7-billion budget for next year. The BuCor, which is under the department, stands to receive P2.3 billion.

"So what's on the menu?" Senior Deputy Minority Leader Roilo Golez asked.

Dapat said inmates enjoyed sausage and coffee for breakfast, smoked fish and rice for lunch, and *daing* (dried salted fish) and rice for dinner. On a good day, he said they were served "adobe"—err, adobo—with rice for lunch.

"You feed them adobe?" Golez asked, triggering more laughter.

One lawmaker asked a colleague if the sausages on the NBP menu were "German franks."

The image of the NBP—one of crowded cells, insufficient meal allocations, dilapidated facilities, and generally inhumane conditions—was apparently not lost on those who heard Dapat's comments.

As of 2004, the NBP housed a total of 16,747 prisoners, a figure nearly twice its 8,700 capacity.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the committee on appropriations, noted that NBP inmates were allocated a daily food allowance of only P40, or P13.33 for every meal.

"You have to look into that spartan meal allocation," he told Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, who had presented the department's proposed budget in her capacity as DOJ officer in charge.

Devanadera said the DOJ had previously requested that the daily meal allowance be increased to P60, but didn't get approval.

At one point, Lagman said, "We've abolished the death penalty, but I'm afraid these inmates might die of malnutrition."

A MESSAGE TO OUR REGULATORS & LEGISLATORS

LOWER POWER COSTS, SPEED-UP POLICY REFORMS

In view of our commitment to the Joint Congressional Power Commission ***JCPC of the 13th Congress***, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch (***COPW***) continue to be vigilant and ensure that ***ANY price adjustments in electricity rates are reasonable and in accordance with the law.***

Our responsibility is to the consuming public. ***To keep them informed*** of the present economic conditions, ***oversee that fair pricing is maintained, protect the Filipino consumers' rights,*** and ***lobby for measures*** to mitigate the impact of price increases.

The Amendments as proposed in ***SB 1234 & HB 1889***, will also remedy the defects of the power reform law, especially in the Transco Privatization. We therefore support the amendments that will provide options and speed-up Transco's privatization.

COPW SUPPORTS the Proposed Amendments of Senator Enrile ***(SN 1234) & HB 1899*** of Representative Miguel Arroyo, Chairman House Committee on Energy and ***will work closely with Congress and the Power Sector, to ensure transparency in the implementation of rate adjustments.***

COPW SUPPORTS THE ENRILE AMENDMENT that the ERC, acting as a Quasi-judicial body, shall conduct public hearings on ***ALL APPLICATIONS FOR RATE INCREASES,*** and henceforth will ***NOT BE ALLOWED TO ISSUE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY*** for electricity rate increases.

COPW proposes that ERC must, within 60 days from billing period of distribution utilities, private sector generating plants, NPC, TRANSCO, PSALM, verify and decide if the increase is correct with finality.

A TRIPLE WHAMMY TO CONSUMERS

Consumers face a triple whammy due to the following:

1. ***First Whammy.*** Meralco has a Cumulative Increase ***NOT yet recovered from September 2006 to June 2007 of P9.1969 per kwh. COPW Position*** is to stagger this monthly increase of ***77 centavos*** per kWh over a 12 month period from September 2007 to August 2008.
2. ***Second Whammy.*** The Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC) has ***to collect from Luzon distribution utilities (DUs) an estimated P6.11 per kWh covering the unsettled cost from September and October billing months in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).***

   COPW will monitor and ensure that ***consumers will not fully absorb the P6.11 per kWh additional cost as DUs ONLY BOUGHT A PORTION OF THEIR POWER SUPPLY FROM WESM*** during the period in question.
3. ***Third Whammy. COPW is opposed to the Performance Based Rate*** setting Methodology recently ***approved by the ERC, to take effect on January 1, 2008.***

Consumers have long been bearing the brunt of high power cost and inefficient power services... The ***EPIRA aims to ensure competition in the power industry to eventually bring down the cost of electricity...***

AMEND EPIRA NOW

COPW SUPPORTS THE AMENDMENTS IN THE EPIRA as introduced by Senator Enrile and Representative Mikey Arroyo that would help attain ***the much delayed open access & retail competition as follows:***

- Lowering the target for NPC asset privatization from ***70% to 50%***
- Lowering the target for the transfer of management and control of NPC plants to the IPP administrators from 70% to 50%

This will lower the cost of electricity for the benefit of the Filipino people, especially the POOR.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to **http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/**

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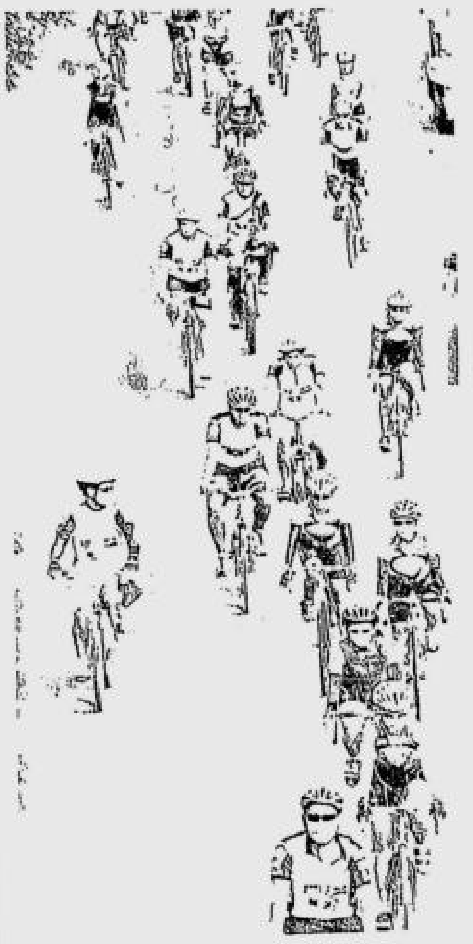

PARTICIPANTS in Bike for Life to raise funds for child cancer patients roll out from Alabang on the 14-day road trip that will take them to Davao City. RYAN LIM

Father bikes to save son with cancer

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LIKE A PROFESSIONAL CYCLIST PREPARING for a big race, Robert Cariño has been seriously training the past two months for the long-distance haul.

But unlike many competitive cyclists, who bike for fame and fortune, the 42-year-old father of four is fired up by a more daunting quest—to save his son's life.

With a borrowed mountain bike, Cariño yesterday kicked off from Alabang, Muntinlupa City, on a 1,500-kilometer, 14-day bike caravan that hopes to raise at least P1 million for medication for his son, Martin Jorel, who is afflicted with lymphoma, and other beneficiaries of the Cancer Warriors Foundation (CWF).

Cariño, who was himself diagnosed with Bell's palsy a few months ago, knows he would need more than good physical conditioning to survive the long back-breaking tour dubbed "Bike for Life 3: A Journey of Courage and Hope."

Aside from Cariño, eight other fathers of young cancer patients, as well as CWF volunteers and supporters like swimming champion Akiko Thompson, joined the pack of bikers.

Founder had brain cancer

Also in the group was James Auste, a brain cancer survivor who founded CWF more than seven years ago.

"I know this caravan will not be easy for us. But just seeing our child warriors fighting for their lives is enough motivation for us to go on," said Auste, his voice cracking.

The caravan also aims to increase public awareness of childhood cancer and call the attention of the national government to the problem.

Cariño admitted it was very hard to accept the fate his of 16-year-old son who was diagnosed more than a year ago.

"It just started with a mass on my son's left hand. Then he started to complain about the pain in his back. Soon after, we were told by the doctor that my son was suffering from lymphoma.

He said the emotional burden of their family was made worse by the financial difficulty they are facing. Martin Jorel needs to undergo chemotherapy once a week in the state-owned Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City. Minus the antibiotics and other prescription drugs, the procedure costs P8,000.

It was during one of his son's chemotherapy sessions that Cariño met Auste and the volunteers of the foundation.

Cariño said his salary as a salesman was simply not enough to provide for the medication and weekly chemotherapy of Martin Jorel and still support the studies of his three other children or even pay the rent of their small apartment in Valenzuela City.

Machine-read passports now available

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS expects a surge in new passport applications and renewals as it starts accepting from the public applications for the new machine-readable passports (MRPs).

"Starting tomorrow, all applications, both first-timers and renewals, will be for MRPs," said Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Domingo Lucenario Jr. yesterday.

The MRPs were initially made available in July only to public officials, senior citizens, migrant workers and their dependents.

MRPs, tamper-proof because of its embedded biometrics security images, will be available at the DFA head office and at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Lucenario said.

By next month, he said, the DFA would bring the MRP technology to its 11 regional consular service offices across the country and eventually to its foreign service posts around the world.

More globally at par

"This is a passport that complies with international standards. This is the way to go. The MRPs are better secured and more globally at par," Lucenario said.

MRPs, a requirement under the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, have been widely used in countries around the world as the technology enables faster processing at immigration counters, neater record-keeping and immediate retrieval and checking.

The new maroon passports will cost the same as the manually read green passports at P500 for regular processing and P750 for express processing.

Lucenario, however, said the public would have to bear with the slower processing time for the MRPs as the DFA's systems and personnel were still adjusting to the new process.

No change in terms of cost

"There will be no change in terms of cost but the process will take a little longer. If before it took three days for express and six days for regular processing, now it will take seven days for express and 14 for regular processing," Lucenario said.

He assured the public the number of processing days would eventually be reduced.

The DFA decided to open MRP applications to the public after it acquired enough booklets from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which supplies the upgraded passports.

It earlier issued around 10,000 MRPs to senior citizens, migrant workers and government employees who were given first crack at the new passports.

The MRP project is an interim measure. The country will eventually shift to fully electronic passports, which use embedded chips to store the passport bearer's data.

Tarra Quismundo

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, September 17, 2007
24th Week in Ordinary Time
Robert Bellarmine

1st Reading: 1 Tim 2:1-8
Gospel: Luke 7:1-10

When Jesus had finished teaching to the people, he went to Capernaum.

There was a captain whose servant was very sick and near to death, a man very dear to him. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent some elders of the Jews to persuade him to come and save his servant's life. The elders came to Jesus and begged him earnestly, saying, "He deserves this of you, for he loves our people and even built a synagogue for us."

Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the captain sent friends to give this message, "Sir, do not trouble yourself for I am not worthy to welcome you under my roof. You see I didn't approach you myself. Just give the order and my servant will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers and I say to this one: 'Go,' and he goes; and to the other: 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant: 'Do this,' and he does it."

On hearing these words, Jesus was filled with admiration. He turned and said to the people with him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The people sent by the captain went back to his house; there they found that the servant was well.

Commentary

We are to pray for those in authority so that we can live our lives undisturbed. But we must remember that God is one and that God wants all people to come to the truth. We have to speak the truth to all including or especially those in authority, and if we must, we must give our lives as ransom for the many. We are to live truthfully, without anger. What does this admonition call us to in our day?

Jesus heals the servant of a centurion. He was part of the occupying force, but respectful of the people and their customs/religion. The servant dies but still he asks, for he knows what it is like to live under authority and he recognizes Jesus' power as stronger than Rome's—stronger than death. And Jesus praises his faith. By whose authority do we live? And do we keep the authority of our nation/state in perspective—that it is nothing in comparison to the authority of God and must be challenged/disobeyed when it stands in opposition to God's authority?

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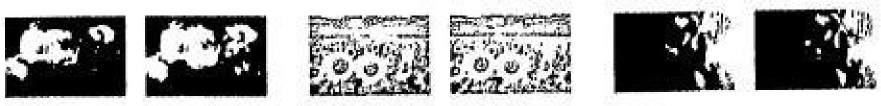

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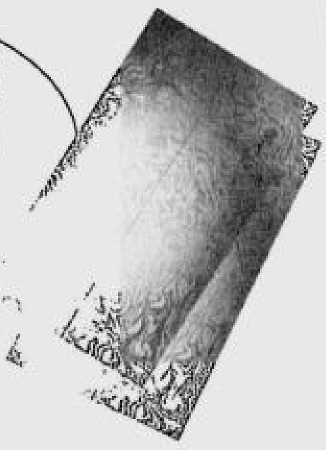

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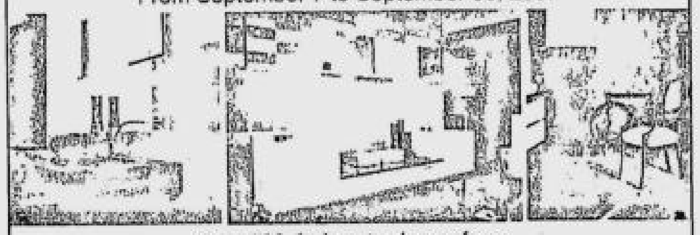

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Per DTI NCR Permit No.AI-0621 Series of 2007

MUSLIMS MARK RAMADAN
A Muslim child stands while his elders kneel and bow in prayer on the third day of the holy month of Ramadan at a mosque in Quiapo, Manila. RYAN LIM

ARMM students score lowest in national test

By Jerry E. Esplanada

A NUMBER OF PUBLIC schools in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were among the poorest performers in the National Achievement Test (NAT) for sixth grade students conducted early this year by the Department of Education.

Of the 11 poorest performing schools, seven were located in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sulu, all in the ARMM, according to a DepEd report furnished the INQUIRER.

Of the 29,962 public schools nationwide whose students took the test, Alog Lumbac Elementary School in Lanao del Sur registered the lowest mean percentage score (MPS) of 5.80 percent.

The average scores of Alog Lumbac's 40 examinees were 0 percent in both Science and Hekasi (Heograpiya, Kasaysayan at Sibika, or Geography, History and Civics), .06 percent in Math, 10.75 percent in English, and 18.19 percent in Filipino.

Lowest performing schools

Alog Lumpac belongs to what the DepEd calls Cluster 5 schools, or those with only 20 to 54 examinees.

The other lowest performing schools included the Punud and Bandaraingud elementary schools, also in Lanao del Sur, with MPS of 23.78 percent and 24.26 percent, respectively.

Others were Lapa and Datu Uddin Bahjin, both in Sulu (23.14 and 27.04 percent), Balindong in Lanao del Sur (27.34 percent) and Sarip Ampatuan in Maguindanao (29.61 percent).

Also among the below-average performing schools were Kawit in Bulacan (23.83 percent), Valderama in Bukidnon (24 percent), Matmad in Quirino (25.13 percent) and Kalitian in Misamis Oriental (25.20 percent).

Scores below 36 percent place students in the low mastery level. Scores between 36 and 65 percent are in the average mastery level, while scores between 66 and 85 percent indicate the students are moving toward the mastery level.

In the ARMM, "some of the probable reasons for the poor performance of schools include the unstable peace and order situation, poverty, inadequate teacher-pupil ratio and the limited learning resources in some of the schools," said Director Nelia Benito of the DepEd's National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC).

Education Secretary Jesli A, Lapus advised low performing schools to "immediately focus on weak subject areas as reflected by the test."

The NAT is used by the DepEd to determine the achievement levels of some 1.6 million Grade 6 students nationwide and identify those who require remedial classes during their first year of high school.

Average mastery level

The NAT results showed that 791,424 students, or 49.17 percent of those who took the test, posted scores between 36 and 65 percent, placing them in the average mastery level.

A total of 623,222 students (38.72 percent of examinees) got scores between 66 and 85 percent, while 63,101 students (3.92 percent) received scores between 86 and 95 percent. Only 56 students received scores between 95 and 100 percent, placing them in the mastery level.

A total of 131,751 students, or 8.18 percent, were considered to be in the low mastery level.

Girls scored a higher MPS of 61.81 percent compared to boys who scored 58.89 percent.

The NETRC also noted that students from rural schools outscored their urban counterparts with an MPS of 60.81 percent compared to 59.48 percent.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will honor in Malacañang the 20 Grade 6 students who topped the NAT.

Leading the student honorees is Jenevieve S. Palma of Lawaan Central School in Eastern Samar who posted an MPS of 96.5 percent, or a raw score of 193 out of 200 items.

The top performing DepEd divisions under Cluster 1 (those with examinees of 10,001 and above) were Batangas, Eastern Samar, Bataan, Western Samar and Cavite; Cluster 2 (5,000-10,000): Southern Leyte, Romblon, Agusan del Norte, Butuan City and Surigao del Sur; Cluster 3 (5,000 and below): Ormoc City, Digos City, Balanga City, Maasin City and Calapan City.

According to the DepEd, there was a 5.28 percent increase in the MPS this year, a rate that went beyond its target of 2 percent.

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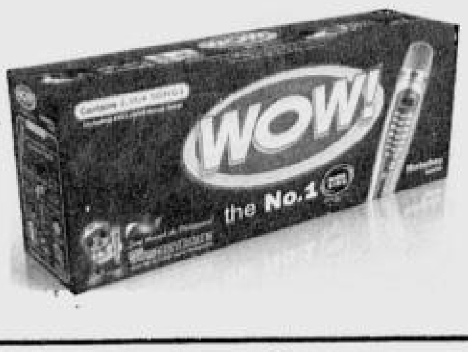

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IT cuts red tape at DPWH

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS and Highways has announced that contractors with dealings with the agency can now track their documents using modern technology.

The DPWH has set up an information technology (IT) kiosk in the lobby of its head office on Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila.

"The program is in line with the pronouncement of President Macapagal-Arroyo to cut red tape in the bureaucracy," said Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. in a statement.

"The DoTS [Document Tracking System] does not allow for the personal follow-up of papers, eliminating personal transactions as well as the '*lagay*' (bribery) system," Ebdane said.

DPWH director Elizabeth Yap said DoTS allows contractors to access documents relating to plan specifications, program of work, approved budget for contract, prequalification resolution, notices of award, contract or to proceed, and pre-clearances for variation order, negotiated procurement or supplemental agreement.

The contractors can also track their contract time extension, memorandum of agreement or understanding, payment for road right-of-way, advance payment, first, immediate and final progress payments, and other civil work documents.

Ebdane said DPWH personnel had been directed to strictly observe the processing time for these documents.

He said erring personnel would be meted out the corresponding sanctions. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

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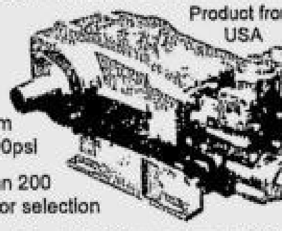

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Peruvians using RP to get to Canada illegally deported

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FOUR PERUVIAN NATIONALS HAVE BEEN deported for attempting to use the Philippines as a jump-off point to enter Canada illegally.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said in a statement he had also ordered the Peruvians placed on the immigration blacklist to prevent their reentry into the country.

Libanan identified the four as Miriam Cecilia Mandamiento San Bartolome, 43; Maria Melita Torres Perlado, 48; Ana Maria Mandamiento San Bartolome, 58, and Omar Luciano Mariluz Recuenco, 28.

He said they were arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Monday last week.

The four had been refused entry into Taiwan and were sent back to Manila after they were caught using fake Mexican and Spanish passports, Libanan said.

"There was no doubt these passengers were involved in an elaborate human trafficking operation that used Manila as their transit point," he said.

According to Clodualdo Penera, migration compliance and monitoring group chief at Naia, the Peruvians left Manila for Taipei on Sept. 8 using fake passports and intending to make their way to Vancouver, Canada.

Penera said the four would have eventually crossed over into the United States from Canada.

He said the Peruvians admitted their real nationalities to immigration agents at the airport. They said they had bought their spurious passports for $3,000 from a man they identified only as Roberto in Malaysia.

Records showed the Peruvians first arrived at Naia on Aug. 14 from Kuala Lumpur.

Last Tuesday, they were deported to their country based on exclusion orders issued against them by the Bureau of Immigration at Naia, Penera said.

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Senate millionaires club: Villar is richest

From page A1

VILLAR: P921.4M

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percent of the combined net worth of P1.954 billion of all 23 senators.

His latest net worth is nearly three times the P330 million he declared in 2000, his first year as a senator.

Trillanes, the jailed leader of the Magdalo group which launched a coup in 2003, reported a net worth of P2.3 million, placing him last on the list of all 23 millionaire senators.

Among the new senators, only Juan Miguel Zubiri joined the 10 richest senators. Zubiri was ninth with a net worth of P43.3 million.

More than P100 million

Two scions of old-rich families followed Villar—Sen. Jamby Madrigal with a net worth of P148.9 million and Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II with P140.3 million.

Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. came in fourth with P107 million.

Villar, Madrigal, Roxas and Revilla are the four senators with a net worth of more than P100 million each.

Rounding out the Top 10 are Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile (P98 million); Sen. Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada (P83 million); Sen. Pia Cayetano (P76.2 million); Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago (P76 million) and Sen. Loren Legarda (P41.4 million).

Modest

Compared to Zubiri, the other neophyte senators have "modest" wealth—Alan Peter Cayetano (P16 million), Benigno Aquino III (P13.3 million) and Francis Joseph Escudero (P7.4 million).

The rest of the senators and their net worth were Edgardo Angara (P41 million), Rodolfo Biazon, (P27.4 million); Panfilo Lacson (P25.8 million) and Richard Gordon (P25.6 million).

Francis Pangilinan (P15.4 million), Gregorio Honasan (P12 million), Lito Lapid (P11.6 million), Joker Arroyo (P11 million) and Aquilino Pimentel Jr. (P10.3 million).

Misleading

The assets declared by the senators does not reflect the current market values of their properties, especially houses and land.

A house and lot in Dasmariñas Village in Makati, for instance, which was acquired in the 1960s, may be worth tens of millions of pesos today.

But its worth as reflected in a SALN would be much less. This is because a senator, or any public official for that matter, can use the acquisition cost of the property in declaring its value.

MILF offers to pull out forces in Basilan, Sulu

From page A1

less elements they are after."

The 12,000-strong MILF has been waging a decades-old rebellion for an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

Lack of coordination

In 2003, the MILF signed a truce with the government, but a lack of coordination between ground forces on both sides has often led to bloody encounters.

In July, renegade MILF guerrillas backed by the Abu Sayyaf ambushed a military convoy, killing 14 soldiers—10 of whom were beheaded. The incident sparked outrage and pushed President Macapagal-Arroyo to mount a massive offensive.

The MILF owned up to the attack, but said its fighters had followed rules of combat and did not mutilate the bodies.

The military later said the offensive was aimed at the Abu Sayyaf, a small gang of self-styled bandits and kidnappers on the US government's list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Peace talks

Government negotiators have said peace talks under the auspices of Malaysia will resume with the MILF this month to coincide with Ramadan, the Islamic fasting season, or shortly after.

Nine days before government forces launched military operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Tipo-Tipo town on Basilan on Aug. 18, MILF forces had already repositioned themselves to avoid misencounters.

Von Al Haq, chair of the MILF's Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, said the decision to reposition MILF guerrillas was reached between himself and his government counterpart, Gen. Edgardo Gurrea.

Al Haq said the government chief negotiator, retired Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, and MILF chief negotiator Mohaqger Iqbal, who both recommended the arrangement to preserve the gains of the peace process, approved the plan.

Maguindanao

In August 2005, MILF rebels vacated their two camps, Badre and Omar Ibni-Khattab, in Guindulongan and Talayan towns in Maguindanao to give way to government troops who were running after Abu Sayyaf and suspected Jemaah Islamiyah militants holed up there.

After the military operations, the rebels were allowed to return to their camps.

With reports from AFP and Nico Alconaba, Inquirer Mindanao

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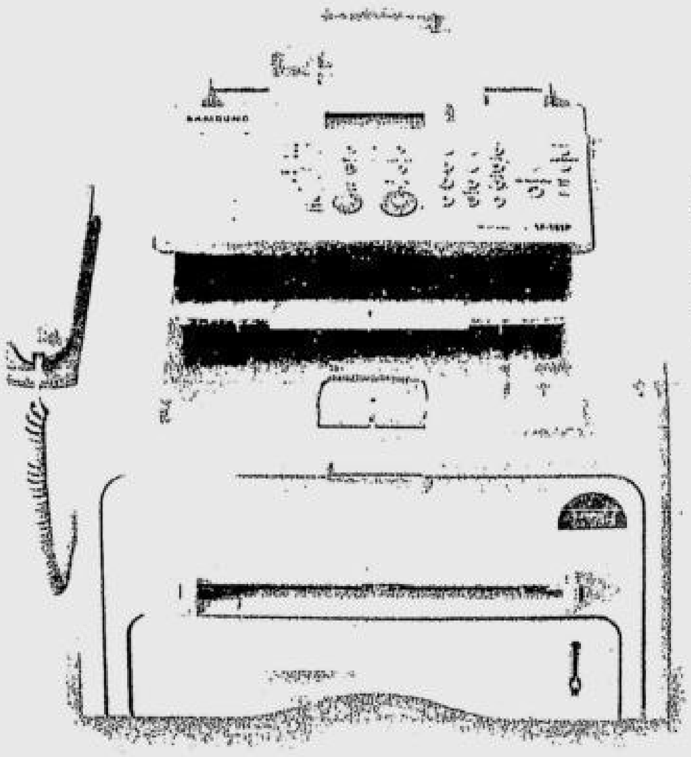

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Prosecutor in Marcos case axed

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING THAT SHE HAD SHOWN HER lack of trustworthiness, the Court of Appeals has upheld the Ombudsman's ruling dismissing a special prosecutor from the service for mishandling two criminal cases filed in 1994 against former first lady Imelda Marcos and several others which the government eventually lost.

The appellate court said special prosecution officer II Evelyn Lucero failed to oppose Marcos' demurrer to evidence in her malversation cases, which was eventually granted and led to the eventual dismissal of the cases.

A demurrer to evidence is a claim that the prosecution's evidence against the accused is insufficient.

With the dismissal of the cases, the Ombudsman found Lucero guilty of gross neglect of duty and ordered her dismissal from the service in June 2004.

Lucero filed a motion for reconsideration, but this was denied.

Moral quality

She then challenged the decision in the Court of Appeals.

But the court refused to accept Lucero's excuse that she was not required to challenge the demurrer to evidence.

"Certainly, for petitioner to high-handedly brush aside all these arguments by a scanty reply that there is no rule requiring all prosecutors to file at all times a comment or opposition to a demurrer to evidence is to give away petitioner's lack of the requisite trustworthiness and nobility of mind and character which all officers serving under the Office of the Ombudsman must possess at all times. It is a rudimentary quality of integrity, of being morally certain 'whose side' they are on," the court said in its Aug. 24 decision.

The court added that moral quality takes great significance; especially in the Marcos cases, which the Supreme Court had described as having "overriding considerations of national interest and national survival."

The appellate court also said the failure to oppose the demurrer to evidence was tantamount to saying that Lucero agreed with Marcos' motion and was endorsing the dismissal of the "gargantuan" criminal cases due to lack of evidence.

Lucero was assigned to prosecute the malversation cases against Marcos who was charged in her former capacity as minister of human settlements, and its other officials namely Jose Benitez, Gilbert Dulay and Rafael Zagela.

Selling out

"Oddly, petitioner did not have enough conviction in the cause that she was supposed to have vigorously prosecuted in the name of the state, that at the accused's declaration that the case against them was weak, petitioner grabbed such first opportunity to express her full agreement, without even putting on a semblance of a fight," the appellate court said.

It also noted the comment of the Ombudsman to Lucero's petition, that it saw her as someone who was "selling out, consorting with and waltzing to the music of the former first lady," and that she would have been better off working for Marcos.

The administrative case against Lucero was filed by the fact-finding and intelligence bureau in the Office of the Ombudsman.

While the complaint was being decided, Lucero was placed under preventive suspension.

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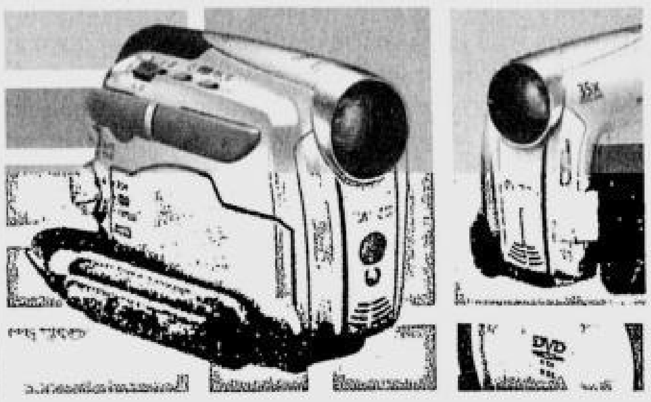

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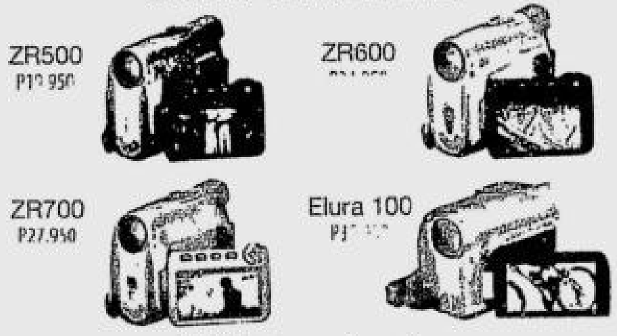

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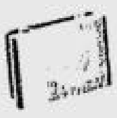

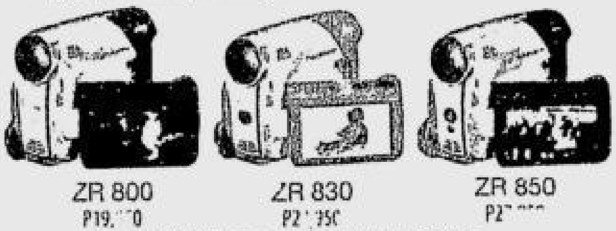

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Legal insanity

EDITORIAL

THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO VIEW THE ESTRADA verdict as a half-empty glass of dubious water are not doing the country any favors. Yes, other plunderers continue to roam the land. Yes, Mr. ex-Marcos justice minister Estelito Mendoza, other public officials continue to rake in enormous amounts of commissions from *jueteng*, and plunder cases can be filed against them. (Would you like to start the ball rolling?) And yes, certain scandals since Joseph Estrada fled Malacañang call for the most severe legal accounting.

But do these **extraneous** facts diminish Estrada's guilt one whit?

Lawyers who think so are indulging a form of legal insanity. They taint the legal process with innuendo or outright contempt, unmindful of or uncaring about their impact on the rule of law itself. What do they want to do, run themselves out of a job?

As we have said time and again, both the Arroyo administration and the Estrada camp have sought to politicize the plunder trial. But the conduct of the Sandiganbayan justices themselves and their measured decision prove that the anti-graft court's Special Division confined itself to the facts and the law of the case at hand.

To be sure, the stature of the principal defendant was not lost on the justices; the decision unfailingly refers to him as "FPres. Estrada," apparently a new honorific. And as we saw on live television, the division's three justices were ready to allow Estrada's continued detention, pending final conviction, in his Tanay, Rizal rest house even before his defense counsel raised the possibility (or even after Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag pandered to the off-site gallery by declaring, airily, that his client did not want special treatment). But we do not believe the rule of law suffered when the former president was accorded these minor courtesies.

It needs to be stressed: the court's independence, as evidenced in its decision, is triumph enough. Its well-tempered decision on the plunder case, however, is a true legal landmark.

Those who insist that Estrada's guilt is contingent on the sins, perceived or real, of the Arroyo administration are preaching a false and cynical faith. Not because these sins do not exist; they do, and the administration's continuing refusal to testify in Congress about various scandals is the surest proof that it has something to hide. But because those who insist are attacking the very rule of law they claim to defend.

To use an unsavory but necessary analogy: Do we stop ourselves from pursuing a case against a rapist, because other rapists have gone scot-free or because other rapes have not been reported? This is not legal realism, or even the realpolitik of law; this is "weather-weather" defeatism, a cynic's formula for anarchy.

Other plunderers roam the land? Then let's throw the book at them too. The good thing is, now we can apply the vital lessons learned from the Estrada plunder trial.

Perhaps first on the list: Involve private lawyers in the preparation and the prosecution. Private law firms can bring otherwise unavailable financial resources and litigation expertise to bear on the case, complementing the work of government prosecutors.

Support government lawyers to the hilt, not least in the matter of which state witnesses to use (necessarily a decision with political considerations). Over-prove the charges, not only through the use of incontrovertible documentary evidence but also through redundant corroborative testimony. And while landing a Chavit Singson is both distasteful but necessary, build the real case with the help of a Clarissa Ocampo—upstanding witnesses with unimpeachable credibility.

It's tough work—and therefore all the more reason to praise the government prosecutors led by Dennis Villa-Ignacio (and spearheaded once upon a time by then-Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo). Tough and—if you listen to the snide Saguisag—fundamentally thankless. Estrada's lawyers believe they had a monopoly not only on the truth of the case but even on sincerity of conviction. It is our duty to disabuse them of their final illusion.

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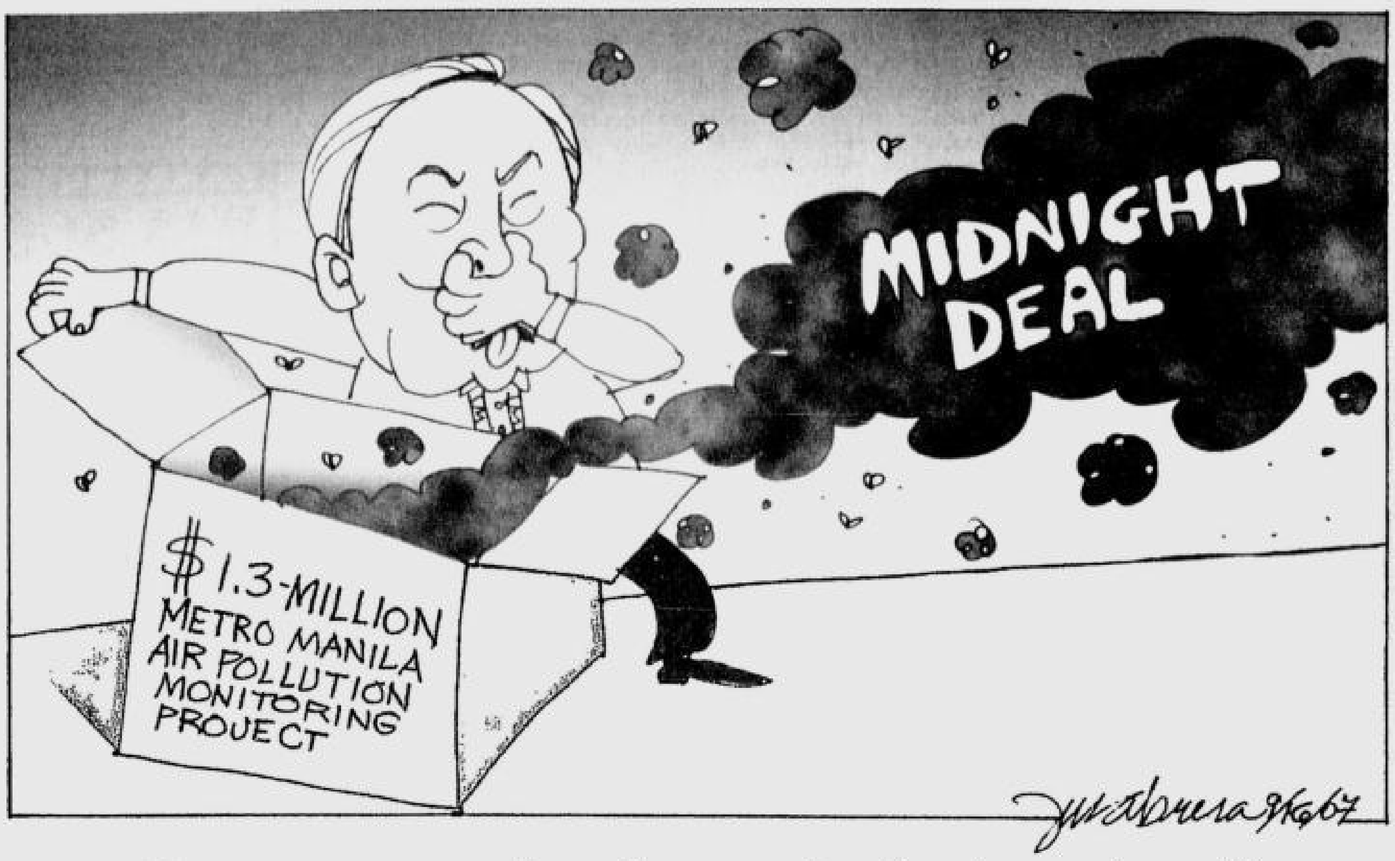
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How can you implement a lost contract?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

JOSE "JOEY" DE VENECIA III REMEMBERS SO many details of his many meetings with Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos regarding his company's proposal to set up a multibillion-peso broadband network for the Philippine government. But he forgot one very important thing: to read the provisions of the anti-graft law.

One of its provisions prohibits relatives of the president, vice president, Senate president and speaker from getting involved in government contracts. JDV III is the son and namesake of Speaker Jose de Venecia. Clearly, he is one of those included in the prohibition. The law spells out the top officials of the land—president, vice president, Senate president, speaker—whose relatives are banned from intervening in government contracts. The reason is obvious: these officials have so much influence on government officials that the mere mention of their names causes lower level officials to lose their objectivity. JDV III was doing an illegal act following up his company's proposed deal with the government.

He may be telling the truth about the illegal $10-million bribery attempt (allegedly by Abalos) on him, in exchange for withdrawing the proposal of his company, Amsterdam Holdings Inc. But it does not extinguish the fact that his act of following up his company's proposal is also illegal.

* * *

As for Abalos, it does not help his case any that he refuses to speak up to defend himself beyond saying he "would talk only at the proper forum"—a cliché echoed by JDV III himself who said he would reveal only at the proper forum the identity of the "mystery man" brought in by Abalos to scare him into withdrawing. People usually interpret such coyness as an indication of guilt. They think that the (coy) person concerned wants to talk to his lawyers first and cover all angles before opening his mouth. A wise legal move but, unfortunately, unwise for the common people who see hemming and hawing and the general lack of forthrightness as a sign of guilt.

Abalos used to be quick at answering questions about other things, so it is quite a change when he clams up on the NBN deal and the alleged bribery attempt.

* * *

And what is the involvement of President Macapagal-Arroyo herself in the broadband deal which is, according to some estimates, overpriced by as much as 100 percent? The President went out of her way to fly all the way to China just to witness the signing of the ZTE contract by Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza and his Chinese counterpart—the same contract that was allegedly stolen soon after it was signed. And even after the Supreme Court had issued a TRO (temporary restraining order) against implementing the contract, GMA issued an official statement that the Philippines "is duty-bound" to honor international contracts such as the NBN deal. Clearly, she was trying to influence the justices who voted against the deal to reverse their votes when the 20-day TRO expires. Why is this NBN deal so important to her that she had to junk proper decorum to push it, in spite of the fact that there is a very big question mark hanging over it?

In the first place, how can you implement a contract that is non-existent? There is no existing copy of the contract, as far as the Philippine government is concerned, yet the administration wants to go ahead with implementing the contract. Isn't that strange? Even more strange, nobody seems interested in producing a copy of the contract. A contract has at least two copies, one for each party. If the Philippine government's copy was "stolen," what about the Chinese copy? It shouldn't be difficult for the Philippines to ask for a photocopy, if only to give the people a general idea of its terms.

And a contract usually has several drafts before it is signed. So the "stolen" copy can be reassembled from the drafts. But obviously, nobody wants the contract seen by "outside eyes." Why? What is so abhorrent or shameful about the contract that those who made and signed it are afraid that it would see the light of day?

But GMA forgot all of these and instead has the temerity to push the contract in spite of the Supreme Court's contrary opinion. Why?

* * *

This may shock Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert "Bistek" Bautista, but fans of former presidential chief of staff and senatorial wannabe Michael Defensor are urging the latter to run for the position to be vacated by Mayor Sonny Belmonte who is on his third and final term. If Defensor decides to throw his hat into the ring, he would make a strong candidate.

People consider Bautista as a shoo-in for the mayoralty in 2010, but that is only because no candidate of Defensor's caliber has surfaced yet. Bautista has not been involved in any controversy yet, but he has not been brilliant as Belmonte's heir apparent either. And as vice mayor for several terms, he has been associated with the mayor's lackluster performance.

Quezon City boasts of having the fattest bank account (estimates range from P2 billion to P6 billion) among all cities in the Philippines. What is all that money doing for the city's taxpayers? Nothing.

Defensor, on the other hand, is an action man. He does things quickly. With him as mayor—and with his experience as housing czar—he may be the one to rid Quezon City of its notorious image as the squatter capital of the Philippines; and to finish the streets of Quezon City—like Congressional Avenue which remains unfinished after 10 years. The completion of Congressional Avenue has been stalled because the Quezon City government has not yet paid for the right of way that covers a very short stretch that would connect Congressional Avenue to Visayas Avenue. With Defensor at its helm, Quezon City may finally become the pride and real capital of the Philippines.

We can do it

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ABC 5 ASKED ME LAST FRIDAY WHY THE public took the Erap verdict passively, or why no one took to the streets to protest it. The answers are not hard to fathom.

One has to say at the outset that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is lucky. It's not just that she has an incredible talent to self-perpetuate, it's that her enemies have an incredible talent to self-destruct. The judgment on Erap last Wednesday is a classic example. The Erap camp was so busy fighting the legal war—his advisers were all feeling lawyerly and eager to awe the world with their legal brilliance—they never saw that the real war lay elsewhere.

There was, first of all, the image war. You have to give it to Malacañang's spin doctors, they know their job. Clearly, they've learned their lessons from the past. Chief of those is that when you have a highly emotionally charged situation, you root out, or curb, the emotional charge. What did in the Erap camp during the opening of the second envelope was the tearful response of the (then) opposition—literally in the case of Loren Legarda—and the gloating of Erap's allies in the Senate—literally also in Tessie Oreta dancing like Salome. And what nearly did GMA in some months after she took power was Erap being fingerprinted like a common thug in a police precinct, which drove the *descamisados* to invade the Edsa Shrine.

Malacañang controlled the image last Wednesday, erasing the emotional content of the verdict completely. And it is a testament to the Erap camp's lack of astuteness it never saw it coming. Its allies in the Senate for one never rose to protest the Sandiganbayan order preventing media from covering the sentencing—only an official camera was allowed to. It was left to media to fight the gag, and they managed to win only small concessions. Media's natural instinct is to look for "human interest," the more poignant, the better. There was none of it last Wednesday.

There were no reaction shots of Erap slumping into his seat or burying his face in his hands. There were no reaction shots of his kin and friends weeping and gnashing their teeth. There were only Rene Saguisag and Jose Flaminiano perorating on certain points of law. Blood does not boil at the sight, and sound, of Saguisag and Flaminiano perorating on certain points of law—other than in their direction.

Just as well, not the slightest hint of gloating from the enemy. GMA appeared in a light blue suit, bordering on gray, with a Japanese official, sending the message, "business as usual." She even cancelled an afternoon talk, I suspect on the advice of her spin doctors who figured that the less she drew attention to herself that day, the better.

Quite apart from the image war, the Erap camp lost the political war. I did say at ABC 5 last Wednesday that Erap's case was not unlike that of Saddam Hussein. Everybody knew Saddam was a bastard, but few took his execution as the triumph of justice the United States advertised it to be. The reason for it was simple: Everyone knew that there was an even bigger bastard, who was the person who invaded his country. It wasn't that Saddam was innocent, it was that George W. Bush was guiltier. Saddam's tack was never to draw attention to himself, it was to draw attention to the right of the court to try him. It was not to insist he was innocent, it was to show that the court had a vested interest in convicting him, which was to legitimize the invasion of Iraq. That tack didn't save him from the gallows, but it put the noose around the necks of his enemies too, probably not entirely figuratively.

Erap's strongest suit was not his innocence, it was GMA's guilt—which was the bigger one. His tack should not have been to draw attention to himself, it should have been to draw attention to GMA—specifically at her vested interest in convicting him, which was to legitimize her rule. He could simply have recited like a mantra that during his watch he never made us the most corrupt country in Asia. Insisting on his innocence cannot possibly bring him much sympathy, it can only piss off people, particularly the middle class who mounted Edsa II.

Indeed, the tack of saying the people have already found him innocent, even if the courts have not, doesn't score points with the public either. Not least because it misrepresents the surveys. The SWS survey for one did not show that most Filipinos found Erap innocent, it showed that most Filipinos saw him as someone who had been punished enough and deserved pardon sooner or later. A sentiment that, to go by previous surveys, comes from the public perception that his crime is dwarfed by the bigger crimes of his successor. Drawing attention to himself rather than to his triers was the wrong tack.

But in the end, the people did not take to the streets to protest the decision because they believed the decision was right. It might have been self-serving, it might have been selective, it might have been incomplete, but it was right. Erap is guilty, he should be convicted. I myself welcome the judgment wholeheartedly, as any reasonable Filipino should. But I also demand, as any reasonable Filipino should, by the same formidable, inexorable, and unyielding logic that says where there's a crime there must be punishment, that what we have done to Erap we do to GMA too. Justice applies to everyone or it applies to no one. Justice is universal or it is not justice at all. The verdict on Erap sets an awesome precedent. Beyond law, it gives us a psychological edge, telling us: We can do it, we can punish crime, we can haul the ass of our highest official to jail for it. We have already done that to someone who has stolen our means and our substance.

Why the hell can't we do that to someone who has stolen our vote, our life and our hope?

Guardians of opacity

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

I LIKE THE WORD OPAQUE. IT IS SUCH A RICH word. It primarily means impervious to light so that images cannot be seen through it. It means dull and without luster. It can also mean obscure and unintelligible in meaning or impenetrable to a specified form of light. Opacity is the capacity of a material, such as photographic film, to stop light.

The words opaque and opacity aptly describe the current administration's attitude toward irregularities and corruption in government. Never mind the talk about transparency and transparency commissions. Talk is cheap. It can be mouthed with fingers crossed.

The government prosecutorial team has just concluded the first phase of its effort to pin down former President Joseph Estrada. Even while the decision of the Sandiganbayan has not yet become final, a team has already been formed, we are told, to ensure the confiscation of millions of pesos worth of property enumerated in the verdict.

The energy being poured into getting results against Estrada is admirable. Would that similar zeal and persistence and energy were also poured into unraveling the truth behind allegations of so much corruption in government being committed by the very guardians of government. Sadly, this is not happening. We see government forces moving instead in an opposite direction. No effort is spared to maintain opacity.

The oath of office solemnly affirms a determination to preserve and defend the Constitution, to execute its laws, to do justice to every man, and to consecrate self to the service of the nation. Taking the oath, to use Thomas More's figure, is like putting water in cupped hands. Un-cup the hands and all is lost. The oath becomes an empty promise.

You can fault the 1987 Constitution for being overly verbose. But verbosity does not do the damage that infidelity inflicts. Call it grand verbosity; but the meaning is clear: "The State shall maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption. Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest."

But that is not all. The Constitution also commands: "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law."

What have we been getting instead? Obstruction and obfuscation. Opacity instead of transparency.

There seems to be a conspiracy among forces in both the legislative and executive departments to obstruct investigations and to cover up reported transgressions. It was painfully clear during the height of the first attempts to ferret out the truth involved in the "Garci" tapes scandal. The matter never became clarified and will probably never be.

Then you had the lukewarm effort to pursue the Bolante case. Jocelyn Bolante belonged to the inner circle and had to be protected—not so much for himself perhaps as for those who have profited from his profligacy.

The crowning achievement was the promulgation of Executive Order 464. It was announced with a tongue in cheek title: "ENSURING OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS, ADHERENCE TO THE RULE ON EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS APPEARING IN LEGISLATIVE INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES." But in reality it was a gag on those who were in a position to shed light on happenings in the dark corners of government. It remains that way.

"A legislative body cannot legislate wisely or effectively in the absence of information respecting the conditions which the legislation is intended to affect or change; and where the legislative body does not itself possess the requisite information—which is not infrequently true—recourse must be had to others who do possess it." Thus spoke Zarathustra in the 1950 Arnault case.

The doctrine has not changed. But it is blithely forgotten under the obfuscating cloud of EO 464; and EO 464 is again being invoked against the Senate's efforts to find the truth behind the ZTE controversy. True, we must honor contracts. But where is the contract, and is it honest? Did not the Supreme Court invalidate the Piatco contract? How easily do we forget!

Indeed the Supreme Court did not declare EO 464 unconstitutional in its entirety. The Supreme Court did not say that "executive privilege" is a constitutional myth. There is a proper place for it. But it is the exception to the rule. The general rule still is transparency and "a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest." Subordinating this important policy to a broad mantle of executive privilege endangers democracy itself.

Thank you, Mother Teresa

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

BY NOW THE WORLD KNOWS OF THE TORment Teresa of Calcutta went through. Except perhaps for Conrado de Quiros whose paean to her (INQUIRER, 8/30/07) is the kind one wishes he/she himself/herself wrote, it can be a travesty to critique her words which ring a poignant and powerful phraseology of the searching soul.

What we can do is to realize how terrible was her deprivation, the better for those who think the quest for God is a smooth path and who disdain those brave enough to admit doubt.

If what Teresa revealed was done by ordinary mortals like you and me, chances are, a zealous friend might warn us of having "a temptation against faith." If extra-zealous, our friend might advice us to seek counsel or go to confession. If overzealous, our friend could hold us suspect as agnostic. Such were the knee-jerk reactions we were brought up in.

But because such an admission came from Teresa, a great, de facto saint even in her lifetime, we may now, by extension, be spared from rash judgment. Still it is possible that some little soul in the woodwork might be secretly thinking, "But how can Teresa be canonized? She doubted the existence of God." In fact, "the jaws (of the sisters of her own congregation) dropped." Thankfully, most of us don't look at it that way. No less than the Pope has conceded to "the silence of God." Teresa is Teresa. Nothing can diminish that.

Thank you, Mother Teresa, for showing us that sometimes in our lives, "atheists, doubters, seekers, believers" miss "the Absent One," reducing us to existentialists doing good despite utter desolation. What mystery lies within this mortal coil, hard-wired to the Transcendental, yet attended by moments of aloneness!

Thank you for dispelling the notion that the lives of saints are sweetness and light, a gush of feeling and always inspirational, making them supermen and superwomen. Too long has this kind of hagiography shaped our views of holy lives and holiness, making us expect more saintliness than is really there, or denying flaws that exist. Teresa, you have been flesh and blood, or shall we say blood, sweat and tears. You are real.

Finally, there is one matter for which I thank Mother Teresa. I am now not speaking of metaphysical doubt on the very existence of God. I am speaking of a matter several notches less profound—not doubt, but what T.S. Eliot, the modern poet guru of our time, called "disturbing the universe."

I refer to the need to ask questions about institutional Church matters that are very much within human reason to discuss and clarify. I hope certainly that with the understanding given to Teresa's deeper doubts, the Church may now be less wary of the spirit of inquiry and be more kind to those who would seek clarification on Church positions, rules, teachings, policies. I certainly hope for a more open climate of discussion or dialogue, shorn of the Church's and some sectors' well-known penchant for marginalizing, silencing or reprimanding.

Although I receive more fan mail than disguised or direct protests, and considering how mildly I write, I have been asked whether I have permission to write what I do or to "cover with the mantel of charity" the shortcomings of the Church. I have been suspected to be a Protestant, or a heretic "automatically excommunicated" for suggesting, some years ago, that there is salvation outside the Church.

Why, for example, can't the faithful openly ask why the hierarchy continues to wear royal raiment and jewelry attended by royal ceremony, and why cardinals and bishops are called "princes" of the Church, and living in the *palacio*? Trying to answer that could lead to lively discussions and a study of: the monarchic Church, tradition, dignity, authority, and the very posture the Church must take in its vaunted preferential option for the poor.

Centuries ago, slavery was moral, interest on money lent was immoral, and a Pope expressed alarm at "the insane notion that universal freedom of conscience should be proclaimed and fought for." If that early somebody thought those church positions were all wrong, he was right! Now slavery is immoral, interest is moral and the primacy of conscience is untouchable.

What happened in between? Theologians, scientists, scholars must have studied, discussed, dissented, then arrived at "new" judgments and conclusions after factoring in contributions of history, discoveries of science, and an ever-growing human consciousness.

Did God or objective truth or the fullness of human dignity change? Not at all. Our developing perceptions and knowledge saw things not seen or known before. That is why it is unfair and even unscholarly to slap "relativism" on matters that are on the cusp of change.

Here's a teaser. When the exact moment life begins and/or ends is unequivocally discovered, expect another round of discussion on population management. That will be unstoppable. The age of Pandora's box is finished.

When Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope, 14 prominent American Catholics were asked, "What should the next Pope do?" One said "Invite to the Vatican the 100 Catholics . . . once considered the Church's major critics . . . like Hans Kung, Charles Curran, Leonardo Boff, and Andrew Greeley." And break bread together.

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Marcos in retrospect (1)

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

YOU'D HAVE TO BE OVER 40 YEARS OLD, AND closer to 50, to remember a time when Ferdinand Marcos wasn't the president yet. If you were born in 1965 (the year he became president), you would have been 21 years old when he finally left the Palace—much of those 21 years of your existence spent listening to government propaganda telling you he was the greatest Filipino ever. If you were born when Marcos fled, you must now be 21 years old—much of your existence spent being told that Marcos was the worst Filipino, ever. Both you and your parents have grown up in the shadow of one man and his wife.

Marcos was not a smoker, he was not known as a drinker, he didn't swear—the strongest expression of irritation people would hear from him was "*Lintik*!" And he was not much more of a womanizer than most men of his generation and macho culture like to think themselves to be. He was not tall, but trim and athletic for most of his life: a marksman, orator, armed with a photographic memory. Surely we can agree he was a man of talent; we continue to disagree whether he used those talents for anything larger than his own ambitions.

The dull biodata of his life, the one we copy and paste for school reports, doesn't force us to try to make sense of his life. Perhaps the most perceptive effort on this that I've encountered was written by an American, Lew Gleeck. He wrote a slender, often quarrelsome book titled "President Marcos and the Philippine Political Culture."

The life of Marcos can be divided, said Gleeck, into phases. Those phases mirrored chapters in our nation's development, and that of the culture in which leaders and the led operate.

Phase One was Marcos the law student who gained fame. While standing trial for the murder of his father's political opponent, Julio Nalundasan, Marcos became the bar exam topnotcher. The Supreme Court summoned him because his grades were so high, the justices were convinced he cheated.

He convinced the justices he had passed. Soon afterwards, he faced some of the justices again, when his conviction for murder reached the Supreme Court on appeal. He won his appeal on Sept. 21, 1940, a date he would immortalize 32 years later.

Phase Two is also the most mysterious: Death March survivor Marcos; the guerrilla Marcos. How much of it, as demonstrated by his medals, was true? At least part of it. Genuine photos taken right after the war showed Marcos with pretty impressive decorations on his chest: a Distinguished Service Cross, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Any veteran with those indisputable awards would be considered a hero—except that Marcos wanted to be the most-awarded veteran, and some of his claims would become, to put it mildly, controversial.

This phase, I'd like to suggest, contains a period often overlooked in the debate over his war record. That period is Marcos' intellectual, even philosophical development. In this he was surely influenced by a statesman to whom Marcos felt he owed his acquittal by the Supreme Court, Jose P. Laurel.

Here's something President Laurel said in 1943: "The whole history of government shows that public affairs would be better administered and the welfare of the people better served in the hands of a moral and intellectual aristocracy. The people cannot be governors and governed at the same time .... On the other hand, a good and efficient government, a benevolent government, may exist and continue indefinitely to function with admirable harmony, when men of superior moral and intellectual endowments are in control of the state."

Laurel also said that there were four rallying centers of our national unity: the Flag, the Constitution, the National Anthem, and the Presidency. Marcos in his day would try to leave his mark on all four: he changed the color of the flag; he unveiled a modern arrangement of the anthem during one independence day; he almost single-handedly wrote a new constitution; and he made his office, and thus himself, the Alpha and Omega of our government and society.

The third phase was Marcos the elected politician: as congressman from 1949 to 1959, first in the Liberal administration, given his first big break as a presidential assistant by President Roxas, then supported in his candidacy by his fellow Ilocano Elpidio Quirino, and then in opposition to the Nacionalistas; then Marcos the senator from 1959 to 1965, including being Senate president from 1963, and president-in-waiting after President Diosdado Macapagal promised to support him in 1965. Marcos the up-and-coming politician had three power bases: his generation of the UP Cadet Corps and the guerrillas, the fraternities and the Ilocano vote.

The fourth phase was the President Marcos of 1965-69, and the incumbent President who achieved a landslide re-election in 1969, only to be embattled from 1969 to 1972 on all fronts. This was a time of social upheaval, where our deeply-divided society tried to figure a way forward.

As Leon Ma. Guerrero, in his justification of martial law, "Today Began Yesterday," wrote, "The experience of the Filipinos ... had been of parties that were not parties but unprincipled coalitions of the rich, the powerful, and the unscrupulous; of elections that were essentially meaningless exercises in fraud, terrorism, bribery and demagoguery; of politicians who represented no one but themselves. The people's capacity for self-government had been trapped in a political mechanism they had not learned to work or control, and their capacity for indignation and generosity, sacrifice and service to the country, left to wither and decay."

The solution, to Marcos' mind, was martial law. This was the fifth phase: the supposedly reformist Marcos, the one who wrote "Today's Revolution: Democracy."

A word of caution about medical tests

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

TEN YEARS AGO, I UNDERWENT A HEART BYPASS OPERAtion at St. Luke's Medical Center. It all started a year earlier when the first indication of trouble hit me like a cold wind blowing on a hot summer day. It was an uncomfortable feeling but I shrugged it off as being part of the aging process. Penny and I were catching a tour in Boston and we were running behind schedule, so I had to make a 200-meter dash to the bus station. Settling down, I felt a strange discomfort around my chest and it took me a bit longer than usual to catch my breath.

When we returned home, an executive check up was suggested—something that never entered my mind in all the years spent in a pressure-packed work environment. The results were not too good. In fact, I did not realize that I was in awful shape. My blood pressure and sugar levels were high; I had hypertension, diabetes, and indications of a prostate problem.

To make a long story short, I ended up on the operating table with three arteries blocked and needing bypass surgery. Some people referred to the procedure as a "CABG (cabbage)" operation, meaning, a coronary artery bypass graft. Most others termed the whole thing as simply a "bypass."

I would like to thank once again my attending physicians. Dr. Cesar "Butch" Recto, my cardiologist, performed the angiogram. Incidentally Butch was a classmate of my son Dr. Miguel Farolan at the UP College of Medicine. Dr. Stan De Castro was the cardiovascular surgeon who opened up and then closed my chest after some fine surgical work inside. Dr. Tom Realiza, a pulmonary specialist, took me through breathing exercises in preparation for the discomfort one undergoes after surgery. All three are among the best in their respective fields and the work they did gave me another 10 years and more of active and productive life. Incidentally, a number of my close friends have suggested chelation instead of open-heart surgery as a possible treatment for heart problems. Chelation is a procedure involving the removal of plaque and other impurities in our blood by means of a chemical or a laser light. My friends swear by the process.

Today, while my blood pressure remains stable and my prostate normal, it is diabetes that is the concern of my doctors. Diabetes may not be life threatening, but the disease, if left unattended, could lead to complications like renal (kidney) failure. This may result in the need for dialysis or even a kidney transplant.

For the past three years I have been undergoing annual tests for my kidneys. The medical term is renal scintigraphy. For us laymen, it is a procedure for obtaining pictures of the kidney by use of radioisotopes injected into our body intravenously. The results are measured in terms of calculated Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) equivalent in ml/min.

Now I realize that this is Greek for most of us. Let me just say that for as long as your GFR is above 20, your kidneys continue to function. Between 20 and 30, it would be advisable to consult closely with a nephrologist (kidney specialist). Below 20, you become a candidate for dialysis, a cumbersome procedure that involves removing waste products and excess water from the body by several means. This requires time, patience, and incurs heavy medical costs.

My doctors will forgive me for oversimplifying the whole issue. There are, of course, other factors that have to be taken into account if we are to arrive at an accurate picture of the problem.

In 2005, my GFR was 73.8. In 2006, it went down to 54.7, a steep deterioration which was cause for concern. In August 2007, my GFR decreased further to 27.7 and for the first time my nephrologist Dr. Ermingarda P. Gueco of Medical City discussed the dreaded letter "D" for dialysis. However she had some reservations since one indicator—my creatinine level—was normal when it should have been abnormal considering the GFR reading.

I decided to have a second opinion and consulted with Dr. Enrique Ona, the executive director of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute in Quezon City. Comparing the results of my GFR tests with other laboratory examinations, he was also puzzled by the same discrepancy noted by Dr. Gueco.

Dr. Ona decided to get in touch with Dr. Angel De Guzman, chief of Nuclear Medicine at the Kidney Institute and the Medical City, who had interpreted the last result. They both agreed that a re-testing should be done because of certain conditions which I did not quite understand at that time.

The re-testing indicated that my GFR equivalent was 74.9; even higher than the 2005 reading. The medical reason advanced for the new figure was "a sub-optimal leveling of MAG-3 as evidenced by free pertechnetate in the stomach." Again this sounds Greek to all of us. But the high figure certainly meant good news.

Now, that's a load off my chest but it doesn't mean I'm out of the woods. I still have to be careful about blood pressure—and diabetes-related problems. This means watching my diet, taking the prescribed medications, exercising, and consulting regularly with my physicians.

My point here is that we should have an open mind about medical test results. They may sometimes be incorrect, possibly leading to all kinds of complications. A second opinion or a re-testing is an option open to all of us. Keep in mind that in the final analysis, it is your health, your well being, and ultimately your life that is at stake.

My special thanks to Dr. Enrique Ona and Dr. Angel De Guzman for their generous time and attention.

* * *

Do you want your children to learn to speak Chinese? Do you want them to learn Mandarin as a second or third language? Do you want to prepare them to take higher level, certificate eligibility exams? Ongoing information sessions at Chinese International School Manila (CISM), a private, co-educational, K-12 international school located at McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, are being held to introduce parents and potential students to the international curriculum standards of CISM. Its program integrates both Western and Chinese outlooks. The school is headed by Maria Louisa Que-Sian, a classmate of my daughter Carmela "Bon" Farolan at International School Manila (ISM Class of '83), along with Felicia Hung-Atienza. See www.cismanila.org.

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Guardians of opacity

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

I LIKE THE WORD OPAQUE. IT IS SUCH A RICH word. It primarily means impervious to light so that images cannot be seen through it. It means dull and without luster. It can also mean obscure and unintelligible in meaning or impenetrable to a specified form of light. Opacity is the capacity of a material, such as photographic film, to stop light.

The words opaque and opacity aptly describe the current administration's attitude toward irregularities and corruption in government. Never mind the talk about transparency and transparency commissions. Talk is cheap. It can be mouthed with fingers crossed.

The government prosecutorial team has just concluded the first phase of its effort to pin down former President Joseph Estrada. Even while the decision of the Sandiganbayan has not yet become final, a team has already been formed, we are told, to ensure the confiscation of millions of pesos worth of property enumerated in the verdict.

The energy being poured into getting results against Estrada is admirable. Would that similar zeal and persistence and energy were also poured into unraveling the truth behind allegations of so much corruption in government being committed by the very guardians of government. Sadly, this is not happening. We see government forces moving instead in an opposite direction. No effort is spared to maintain opacity.

The oath of office solemnly affirms a determination to preserve and defend the Constitution, to execute its laws, to do justice to every man, and to consecrate self to the service of the nation. Taking the oath, to use Thomas More's figure, is like putting water in cupped hands. Un-cup the hands and all is lost. The oath becomes an empty promise.

You can fault the 1987 Constitution for being overly verbose. But verbosity does not do the damage that infidelity inflicts. Call it grand verbosity; but the meaning is clear: "The State shall maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption. Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest."

But that is not all. The Constitution also commands: "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law."

What have we been getting instead? Obstruction and obfuscation. Opacity instead of transparency.

There seems to be a conspiracy among forces in both the legislative and executive departments to obstruct investigations and to cover up reported transgressions. It was painfully clear during the height of the first attempts to ferret out the truth involved in the "Garci" tapes scandal. The matter never became clarified and will probably never be.

Then you had the lukewarm effort to pursue the Bolante case. Jocelyn Bolante belonged to the inner circle and had to be protected—not so much for himself perhaps as for those who have profited from his profligacy.

The crowning achievement was the promulgation of Executive Order 464. It was announced with a tongue in cheek title: "ENSURING OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS, ADHERENCE TO THE RULE ON EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS APPEARING IN LEGISLATIVE INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES." But in reality it was a gag on those who were in a position to shed light on happenings in the dark corners of government. It remains that way.

"A legislative body cannot legislate wisely or effectively in the absence of information respecting the conditions which the legislation is intended to affect or change; and where the legislative body does not itself possess the requisite information—which is not infrequently true—recourse must be had to others who do possess it." Thus spoke Zarathustra in the 1950 Arnault case.

The doctrine has not changed. But it is blithely forgotten under the obfuscating cloud of EO 464; and EO 464 is again being invoked against the Senate's efforts to find the truth behind the ZTE controversy. True, we must honor contracts. But where is the contract, and is it honest? Did not the Supreme Court invalidate the Piatco contract? How easily do we forget!

Indeed the Supreme Court did not declare EO 464 unconstitutional in its entirety. The Supreme Court did not say that "executive privilege" is a constitutional myth. There is a proper place for it. But it is the exception to the rule. The general rule still is transparency and "a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest." Subordinating this important policy to a broad mantle of executive privilege endangers democracy itself.

Thank you, Mother Teresa

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To make a long story short, I ended up on the operating table with three arteries blocked and needing bypass surgery. Some people referred to the procedure as a "CABG (cabbage)" operation, meaning, a coronary artery bypass graft. Most others termed the whole thing as simply a "bypass."

I would like to thank once again my attending physicians. Dr. Cesar "Butch" Recto, my cardiologist, performed the angiogram. Incidentally Butch was a classmate of my son Dr. Miguel Farolan at the UP College of Medicine. Dr. Stan De Castro was the cardiovascular surgeon who opened up and then closed my chest after some fine surgical work inside. Dr. Tom Realiza, a pulmonary specialist, took me through breathing exercises in preparation for the discomfort one undergoes after surgery. All three are among the best in their respective fields and the work they did gave me another 10 years and more of active and productive life. Incidentally, a number of my close friends have suggested chelation instead of open-heart surgery as a possible treatment for heart problems. Chelation is a procedure involving the removal of plaque and other impurities in our blood by means of a chemical or a laser light. My friends swear by the process.

Today, while my blood pressure remains stable and my prostate normal, it is diabetes that is the concern of my doctors. Diabetes may not be life threatening, but the disease, if left unattended, could lead to complications like renal (kidney) failure. This may result in the need for dialysis or even a kidney transplant.

For the past three years I have been undergoing annual tests for my kidneys. The medical term is renal scintigraphy. For us laymen, it is a procedure for obtaining pictures of the kidney by use of radioisotopes injected into our body intravenously. The results are measured in terms of calculated Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) equivalent in ml/min.

Now I realize that this is Greek for most of us. Let me just say that for as long as your GFR is above 20, your kidneys continue to function. Between 20 and 30, it would be advisable to consult closely with a nephrologist (kidney specialist). Below 20, you become a candidate for dialysis, a cumbersome procedure that involves removing waste products and excess water from the body by several means. This requires time, patience, and incurs heavy medical costs.

My doctors will forgive me for oversimplifying the whole issue. There are, of course, other factors that have to be taken into account if we are to arrive at an accurate picture of the problem.

In 2005, my GFR was 73.8. In 2006, it went down to 54.7, a steep deterioration which was cause for concern. In August 2007, my GFR decreased further to 27.7 and for the first time my nephrologist Dr. Ermingarda P. Gueco of Medical City discussed the dreaded letter "D" for dialysis. However she had some reservations since one indicator—my creatinine level—was normal when it should have been abnormal considering the GFR reading.

I decided to have a second opinion and consulted with Dr. Enrique Ona, the executive director of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute in Quezon City. Comparing the results of my GFR tests with other laboratory examinations, he was also puzzled by the same discrepancy noted by Dr. Gueco.

Dr. Ona decided to get in touch with Dr. Angel De Guzman, chief of Nuclear Medicine at the Kidney Institute and the Medical City, who had interpreted the last result. They both agreed that a re-testing should be done because of certain conditions which I did not quite understand at that time.

The re-testing indicated that my GFR equivalent was 74.9; even higher than the 2005 reading. The medical reason advanced for the new figure was "a sub-optimal leveling of MAG-3 as evidenced by free pertechnetate in the stomach." Again this sounds Greek to all of us. But the high figure certainly meant good news.

Now, that's a load off my chest but it doesn't mean I'm out of the woods. I still have to be careful about blood pressure—and diabetes-related problems. This means watching my diet, taking the prescribed medications, exercising, and consulting regularly with my physicians.

My point here is that we should have an open mind about medical test results. They may sometimes be incorrect, possibly leading to all kinds of complications. A second opinion or a re-testing is an option open to all of us. Keep in mind that in the final analysis, it is your health, your well being, and ultimately your life that is at stake.

My special thanks to Dr. Enrique Ona and Dr. Angel De Guzman for their generous time and attention.

* * *

Do you want your children to learn to speak Chinese? Do you want them to learn Mandarin as a second or third language? Do you want to prepare them to take higher level, certificate eligibility exams? Ongoing information sessions at Chinese International School Manila (CISM), a private, co-educational, K-12 international school located at McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, are being held to introduce parents and potential students to the international curriculum standards of CISM. Its program integrates both Western and Chinese outlooks. The school is headed by Maria Louisa Que-Sian, a classmate of my daughter Carmela "Bon" Farolan at International School Manila (ISM Class of '83), along with Felicia Hung-Atienza. See www.cismanila.org.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Pro-lawbreakers, anti-law enforcers

I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND saw a Land Cruiser park in front of a "No Parking" sign, right in front of a yellow-clad traffic officer. When I asked him why he did not stop the man from parking, he looked at me resignedly and said the man would just get angry with him.

I rode a bus and saw a couple of passengers smoking. I asked the conductor to tell them not to smoke in a public vehicle. Obviously irritated, the conductor looked at me and said those men would just get angry with him if he did.

A passenger told the jeepney driver to stop. A policeman came near and asked the driver why he stopped in a clearly marked prohibited zone. The driver told the policeman that if he didn't, the passenger would get angry with him.

I notice that we are afraid of people who clearly break the law but get irritated with people who try to enforce the law.

It's sad to think that we actually allow people to get away with breaking the law. I do not know who to pity most, the conductor for his misplaced subservience, the passenger for his indifference, or me for having to endure all this. As I turned away from the traffic officer, he hastily called the attention of a driver for parking his vehicle in front of a "No Parking" sign. I noted the vehicle was a "nineteen-forgotten" Toyota.

Well, we allow some people to get away with breaking the law.

—DITAS ROXAS,
ditasroxas@gmail.com

Apec and GBPC not technical partners

I AM WRITING IN REFERENCE to the news item "Power plant to rise in Iloilo." (INQUIRER, 9/11/07)

We would like to clarify that Asia Pacific Energy Corporation (Apec) is not the technical partner of Global Business Power Corporation (GBPC). Apec is the showcase power plant of Formosa Heavy Industries Corporation (FHIC) in the Philippines. GBPC has partnered with FHIC for the technical development of the expansion project for Panay Power Corporation.

—MIREN SANCHEZ-FACULTAD,
compliance/commercial officer,
Global Business
Power Corporation,
GT Tower International,
Ayala Avenue cor.
HV dela Costa Street,
Makati City

Why Meralco was returned to Lopezes

NEAL CRUZ HAS MALICIOUSLY hit Sen. Joker Arroyo twice in a period of one week. (INQUIRER, 8/31/07 and 9/7/07)

Cruz writes that right after Edsa I, President Corazon Aquino and Executive Secretary Arroyo turned over Meralco to the Lopezes "lock, stock and barrel with nary an audit and evaluation of what ought to have been given." True, because President Ferdinand Marcos, during martial law, confiscated Meralco from the Lopezes lock, stock and barrel, and turned it over to the Romualdezes.

Meralco, a critical public utility, then under a hostile management, was in a position to destabilize the new Aquino administration. To preclude that, President Aquino restored control of Meralco to the Lopezes who originally controlled and ran it before martial law.

Where was Cruz during all that time? He was glued to his desk in the Daily Express, holding the fort for that propagandist paper of the Marcoses, owned by another crony, Roberto Benedicto.

It took six years and three presidents to pass the Electric Power Industry Reform Act. Senator Arroyo fought and voted against it. Amending it would take that long, what with so many vested interests involved. Arroyo would like to short-cut it by letting the Joint Congressional Power Commission administratively do the amending job.

ABS-CBN did not support Senator Arroyo in the last elections.

—ABIGAIL ANNE L. HINTO,
deputy chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Joker Arroyo,
Financial Center,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

Who are the real barbarians?

IRONIC ISN'T IT, THAT FRATERNITY members in the University of the Philippines refer to those who do not belong to a fraternity as "barbarians"? I think many of us are left wondering who are the real barbarians here.

It is perhaps ironic, too, that so many "brods" from organizations with a record of hazing end up becoming the nation's political and economic leaders.

Does this perhaps explain the country's culture of political violence and culture of impunity?

—ARTHUR NEAME,
arthur_neame@yahoo.com

Barangay elections in a democracy

CONGRESS SHOULD NOT DENY OUR RIGHT to elect our barangay officials.

Malacañang does not want the Oct. 29 barangay elections postponed. The Palace says money is available for this electoral exercise.

But Congress wants the elections postponed for the fourth time, to 2009, or a few months before the 2010 presidential elections. Its reasons: The Comelec does not want it held as yet, the Liga ng Barangay is lobbying for its postponement (of course!), and too much election spending in one year will contribute to inflation.

The real reason is that national politicians use barangay governments to deliver votes for them. Barangay elections after a national election are a useless exercise for these politicians. But barangay elections before a national election are critical to vote-getting.

Congressmen and senators would rather ruthlessly deny the people of the Philippines their constitutionally mandated right to replace overstaying and non-performing political leaders, as well as the right to give a fresh mandate to performing leaders.

More experiments on participatory local governance can come with the change of politicians at the barangay level. Postponing elections contributes to the decline of democracy and worsening poverty of the suffering masses. It's undisputable: where local governance empowers people, poverty levels diminish significantly.

—RALPH CARREON DIAZ,
member, Filipinos in the
United Nations Network

A cop's widow cries for compassion

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE COMpassionate flood of benefits given by our government to the families of our Marines killed by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan. The benefits were well-deserved, for the courageous Marines died heroically in defense of our country.

In a parallel situation, my late husband, P/Cpl. Tirso D. Diocampo, chief of police of MacArthur, Eastern Samar, was killed by the New People's Army in 1984, heroically defending his station, practically all by himself. But there was no compassionate flood of benefits for me and my five children. In fact, there was hardly any benefit at all. And to top it all, I now have to pay in full—including interests, fees and penalties—the GSIS housing loan my good husband took for our family home. The loan has now ballooned to more than P239,000 from P42,286.

I have tried to pay my husband's loan and take care of my family at the same time, but I simply do not have enough money for both commitments (I had already paid P31,285 for this loan through the years). Indeed one of my children, who was mentally ill, died in 2006, partly because I did not have enough money for proper medical treatment.

I think it is not right that my husband should give up his life defending this government, only to be forgotten by the very same government which, through the Government Service Insurance System, is now without mercy requiring me, his widow, to pay in full his housing loan—including interests and penalties. I have struggled and appealed for 21 long years to the GSIS and this government to treat me and my family with some compassion and humanitarian consideration. The final outcome of my struggle is a final non-negotiable order for me and my family to vacate our house on Sept. 15.

There is no flood of compassion, only a flood of indifference.

I am only a poor widow with five children. I am politically insignificant and my husband's lonely death does not rustle the national consciousness. Will my husband's death be in vain for us, his family?

Ninoy Aquino, is the Filipino and this nation really worth dying for?

—NELITA G. DIOCAMPO,
Blk. 16, Lot 38, Phase 2,
V&G Subd., Tacloban City

Human rights advocates show bias

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES were enraged by the arrest and what they termed as the inhuman treatment of a member of the notorious Abu Sayyaf by police and military agents.

In Davao City, another group of human rights advocates was angered by the inclusion of Islamic teachers among those served with warrants of arrest.

Days have passed since the bombing of a bus which killed a Christian preacher in Koronadal City. We never heard any voice of concern from the human rights advocates. Neither have we heard them lament, even faintly, the ambush and decapitation of Philippines Marines who were out to rescue kidnapped priest Giancarlo Bossi.

To be sure, these are not the only instances that human rights advocates have betrayed their bias. They are quick to denounce when law enforcers are involved but they are consistently quiet when terrorists commit horrible crimes.

In Davao, human rights advocates don't seem to remember the Rano Massacre where innocent children, men and women were killed by the New People's Army. Did we hear any word of condemnation from them when terrorists bombed the airport and seaport in Davao, which claimed the lives of 33 innocent civilians and crippled several others?

Why raise an issue over the serving of warrants to Islamic preachers? Have they not heard of Islam and Christian preachers and ministers who have been involved in crimes? Why raise the issue of religion and why suggest that the religious among them are infallible?

We will be the first to condemn the police and the military if they went outside the bounds of law; but in the case of the Basilan massacre, we should allow the wheels of justice to grind. This is not to demonize the religious. This is to seek the truth to give justice to our soldiers who were there to save a life.

—MENARDO WENCESLAO,
mewenceslao@yahoo.com

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RP opens Asia bird festival season

THE 3RD PHILIPPINE BIRD FESTIVAL, TO be held in Cebu City on Sept. 21-22, will open the bird festival season in Asia.

The Cebu event will be followed by the 6th Seosan International Bird-watching Festival in Seosan City, Korea, in October and by the 9th Taipei International Bird-watching Fair in Taipei and the 7th Thailand Bird-watching Festival in Bangkok in November.

The three festivals will take place in the migratory season, when the birds flee the winters of Siberia, northern Japan and similar places to seek refuge in warmer countries like the Philippines.

The first day of the festival will be held at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino where the spotlight will be on Cebu's inland birds, particularly the Cebu Flowerpecker, one of the world's rarest birds that is endangered because of its rapidly shrinking forest habitat.

The festival's second day will take place in Cebu's Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, the only place in the country where at certain times the threatened Asian Dowitcher may be spotted. The Chinese Egret, a vulnerable species also with a declining population, is another winter visitor.

Earlier, Cebu Mayor Tomas Osmeña announced to the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, festival organizer, that he was setting aside two hectares of reclaimed land in the 300-ha South Road Properties for a permanent bird sanctuary.

Aside from the City of Cebu, the festival is sponsored by TeaM Energy Foundation, Sulpicio Lines, Harbor Star Shipping Lines, Georgia Club, Pioneer Insurance, Ramon Aboitiz Foundation and World Wildlife Fund-Philippines.

Exhibitors are Philippine Eagle Foundation, Katala Foundation, Center for Environmental Awareness and Education, Cebu Biodiversity Foundation, Isla Biodiversity Conservation, WWF-Philippines, Wild Bird Society of Taipei, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand, Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network, and the City of Seosan.

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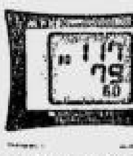

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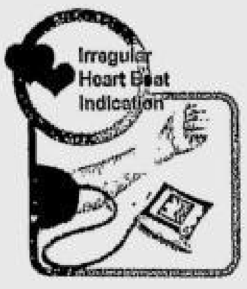

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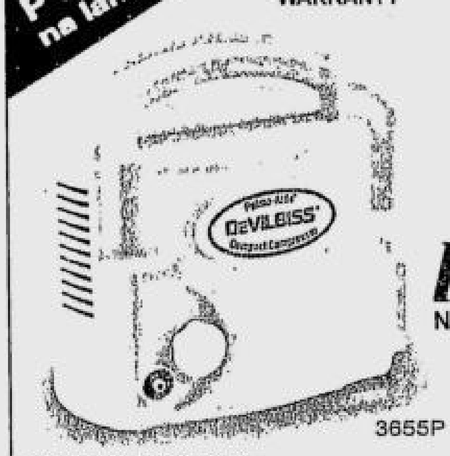

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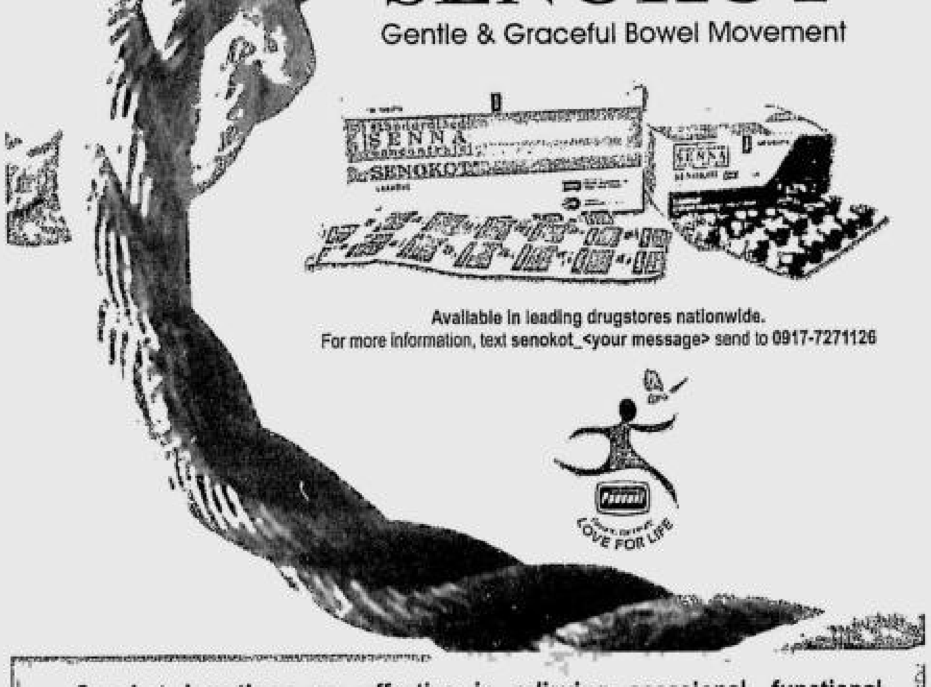

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Coconuts to fuel growth in Pacific

From page A1

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Ironically, however, the growth in the use of bio-fuels worldwide has helped push the price of crop oils higher and coconut oil now fetches nearly $1,000 per ton.

"There is strong demand for vegetable oils, there is a huge demand in the US and Europe," says Jan Cloin, the energy adviser at the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (Sopac) based in Suva.

"The Pacific island countries could get into a situation where they cannot afford to use the oil themselves and would profit more by sending their oil to other countries."

Committed to idea

Kramer's company exports most of the oil from the Tolobar mill it operates for the Marshall Islands government and its coconut oil fuel projects have recently taken a back seat.

"At the peak we used 100-percent coconut oil in ships with 1,000 horsepower engines and all the way down to five horsepower generators," he said.

But he remains committed to the idea, especially using coconut oil to generate electricity in remote islands, where diesel is particularly expensive.

Coconut oil was used as a substitute for diesel in the Philippines during World War II when diesel was scarce, but it is only in recent years the idea has taken off.

The rising cost of oil, worries that oil will run out and increasing concerns about the environmental impact of fossil fuels have all boosted attempts to find alternative energy sources.

Experiment

In the Marshall Islands, Kramer has been experimenting for several years with trying pure coconut oil in some of his vehicles, as well as heavy machinery and even tug boats and a cargo ship.

Some modern diesel engines are less tolerant of pure coconut oil. Another problem is that coconut oil starts to solidify below 25 degrees Celsius—but that is not a problem on many tropical islands.

Kramer found carefully filtered coconut oil with excess moisture removed worked perfectly in many diesel engines.

FARMER Elpedio Lagutan climbs a coconut tree to gather its sap in Tolosa, Leyte.

VEN LABRO/INQUIRER VISAYAS

"With some of our trucks we run, we've been running on coconut oil for years and we haven't had a problem after four or five years. But for many engines, a blend with diesel worked best.

"We did blends anywhere from 10 percent to 90 percent (with diesel) and we found the most tolerance for all types of engines was a 50-50 blend."

Experiments

Australian-born entrepreneur Tony Deamer has also been experimenting in Vanuatu, running some vehicles from his own hire car and car dealership on pure coconut oil.

He has also sold a blend of 80-percent coconut oil and 20-percent kerosene as a diesel alternative under the Island Fuel brand.

Island Fuel has been on hold recently due to some equipment problems, but Deamer says it will be up and running again soon.

Experiments with power generators have also been successful. In Vanuatu, an electricity company has been using diesel blended with coconut oil to run a large four-megawatt generator.

Deamer says the proportion of coconut oil, which is 15 percent now, is being gradually increased to see how the generator performs.

On Savaii island in Samoa, the electricity company has been running one generator on a coconut oil blend with success.

Deamer says substituting coconut oil for diesel will boost the declining copra industry.

Prospects promising

"My motivation is partly trying to keep some money going overseas here in the country instead, and keep some employment in rural areas," Deamer says. "I think it still has a future, I think we can make it happen."

Cloin says the economics of using coconut oil for fuel are marginal, although the copra industry is already subsidized in many island-countries, making diesel substitution more viable.

"You have to understand that with normal economics, it doesn't really add up," he says. "But if you agree electrification of remote islands is a good idea and subsidies are a good idea, then using coconut oil is a good idea."

More mechanization of the labor-intensive process of extracting the oil would also improve the economics.

Kramer has developed a small mill—itself powered by coconut oil—which could be set up in a village to fuel a generator.

"There is definitely a future," he says. "Our company recently made a decision to use more of it, just to try to get the country a little bit less dependent on imported diesel." *AFP*

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The rising cost of oil, worries that oil will run out and increasing concerns about the environmental impact of fossil fuels have all boosted attempts to find alternative energy sources.

Experiment

In the Marshall Islands, Kramer has been experimenting for several years with trying pure coconut oil in some of his vehicles, as well as heavy machinery and even tug boats and a cargo ship.

Some modern diesel engines are less tolerant of pure coconut oil. Another problem is that coconut oil starts to solidify below 25 degrees Celsius—but that is not a problem on many tropical islands.

FARMER Elpedio Lagutan climbs a coconut tree to gather its sap in Tolosa, Leyte.

VEN LABRO/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Kramer found carefully filtered coconut oil with excess moisture removed worked perfectly in many diesel engines.

"With some of our trucks we run, we've been running on coconut oil for years and we haven't had a problem after four or five years. But for many engines, a blend with diesel worked best.

"We did blends anywhere from 10 percent to 90 percent (with diesel) and we found the most tolerance for all types of engines was a 50-50 blend."

Experiments

Australian-born entrepreneur Tony Deamer has also been experimenting in Vanuatu, running some vehicles from his own hire car and car dealership on pure coconut oil.

He has also sold a blend of 80-percent coconut oil and 20-percent kerosene as a diesel alternative under the Island Fuel brand.

Island Fuel has been on hold recently due to some equipment problems, but Deamer says it will be up and running again soon.

Experiments with power generators have also been successful. In Vanuatu, an electricity company has been using diesel blended with coconut oil to run a large four-megawatt generator.

Deamer says the proportion of coconut oil, which is 15 percent now, is being gradually increased to see how the generator performs.

On Savaii island in Samoa, the electricity company has been running one generator on a coconut oil blend with success.

Deamer says substituting coconut oil for diesel will boost the declining copra industry.

Prospects promising

"My motivation is partly trying to keep some money going overseas here in the country instead, and keep some employment in rural areas," Deamer says. "I think it still has a future, I think we can make it happen."

Cloin says the economics of using coconut oil for fuel are marginal, although the copra industry is already subsidized in many island-countries, making diesel substitution more viable.

"You have to understand that with normal economics, it doesn't really add up," he says. "But if you agree electrification of remote islands is a good idea and subsidies are a good idea, then using coconut oil is a good idea."

More mechanization of the labor-intensive process of extracting the oil would also improve the economics.

Kramer has developed a small mill—itself powered by coconut oil—which could be set up in a village to fuel a generator.

"There is definitely a future," he says. "Our company recently made a decision to use more of it, just to try to get the country a little bit less dependent on imported diesel." *AFP*

IN THE KNOW

Amnesty or pardon

ONE OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES between amnesty and a pardon is that an amnesty wipes out the offense, while a pardon remits the punishment.

As stated in amnesty proclamations signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos in 1992 and his successor Joseph Estrada in 1999, an amnesty "completely obliterates" the offense.

Amnesty is granted usually to those who commit political offenses, like treason, sedition and rebellion. It is usually given to more than one person, such as when Estrada extended amnesty to members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2000.

The President can grant amnesty only upon approval of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

A common provision in amnesty proclamations requires the persons involved to apply for amnesty within a specified period.

On the other hand, a pardon is given by the President only after a person has been convicted by final judgment. It condones infractions of the peace of the state.

There are two types of pardon. Absolute pardon frees the convicted person without any conditions whatsoever. Conditional pardon does not become operative until the grantee has performed a specific act. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

Erap open to amnesty

From page A1

proposal raised last month by Speaker Jose de Venecia, Rodriguez said.

"He's open to an amnesty, but he needs to make sure of the provisions. It needs to be studied," the lawmaker said. "The number one provision is that there should be no admission of guilt."

No guilt implied

"Pardon is really out," he said.

Rodriguez said the general concept of an amnesty did not consider the guilt or innocence of a recipient.

He also said that a pardon could be availed of only upon final judgment.

In that case, not only would Estrada have to acknowledge his guilt, he would also have to forego an appeal against the conviction in the Supreme Court, Rodriguez said.

Estrada has always maintained he is innocent of the crime of plunder and that his six-year trial was engineered to convict him.

Days before the court verdict, he said he would not plead with the government and was ready to go to prison.

Rodriguez said that right at the outset, an acquittal was impossible because it would have shown that Edsa II, which swept President Macapagal-Arroyo into office, was illegal.

An acquittal of Estrada would have cast yet another shadow on the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration, he said.

Rodriguez said he would discuss with De Venecia today the Speaker's proposal of a "wide-ranging, all-encompassing amnesty to cover all insurgents and all those who have committed political crimes against the state."

Rodriguez said he was willing to cosponsor an amnesty resolution with De Venecia to jump-start the process.

De Venecia has said Estrada would be covered by his amnesty proposal and this would be the first step toward bridging the political divide in the country.

He did not explain how his proposal would cover Estrada who was convicted not of a political offense but of a heinous crime.

Healing political divisions

Malacañang has given no definite indication it is willing to grant amnesty to Estrada, but Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno recently said it was no secret that Ms Arroyo "is seeking a greater national reconciliation."

Rodriguez said that Estrada, who appeared to be in a "better mood" when he talked with him, was willing to study the amnesty in the interest of national reconciliation.

Businessmen still cautious ...

From page A1

rebound should not be read with too many meanings, such as the Sandiganbayan decision giving a fresh momentum to the remarkable 7.5-percent annual growth rate of the economy for the second quarter of 2007.

The plunder decision may have brought closure to the most celebrated corruption case in this country's criminal history, but it's too early to say our days as the "perpetual sick man of Asia" are numbered.

Cautious

The markets are cautious and are not dancing to the euphoric tune of the government that is now celebrating the verdict as a major political triumph confirming the legitimacy of the first term of President Macapagal-Arroyo (circa 2001-04).

The government is also celebrating the verdict as a green light to "move on" toward the path of putting the horses of the economy ahead of the chariots of political discord.

The markets are merely discounting political risks after their worst concerns over the violent reaction by Estrada's horde of urban poor fans to a conviction were not confirmed.

One money trader said the decision "put the market at ease." As a fund manager at ING Securities Philippines pointed out, "There was a relief rally. The key was everything was peaceful. There were no violent mass actions. Those investors who remained on the sidelines can now start deploying some of their cash."

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities said: "The court has spoken. It's time to move on."

Still a lot of hurdles

While the markets reacted positively to the verdict, it is still too early to say that the political tension has totally eased. "Fundamentals are starting to prevail over emotion, but there are still a lot of hurdles." A well-put observation, and word of caution.

The markets' perspective contrasted sharply with the spin given by the government, legal circles and politicians to the Sandiganbayan verdict. These quarters emphasized the aspects relating to the implications of the decision for the rule of law, the capacity of the judicial system to put closure to a protracted criminal case, its ability to punish the highest public officials, and the effects on political stability.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio put the prosecution's and the government's perspective aptly.

"This is the last chance for the state to show that we can do it, that we can charge, prosecute and convict a public official regardless of his stature. It shows that our judicial system really works," he said.

Self-congratulatory theme

This view is a variation on the self-congratulatory theme that hails the verdict as the triumph of the rule of law and upholds the notion that justice is blind and is equally applicable to the high and mighty, and the most lowly citizen. The theme is shared by many among the middle class, who are mostly no fans of Estrada's vulgar style of presidency.

When the government speaks of the "rule of law," we must be skeptical and ask, "Whose rule of law? That of a government with a penchant for arbitrary decisions?"

The emptiness and the myth of this idealized vision of the rule of law would soon be put to the test when Ms Arroyo responds to pressure building up on her to grant Estrada executive clemency in the interest of political reconciliation.

During Estrada's six-year detention while he was standing trial, it was abundantly clear that the house arrest privileges extended to him showed that some citizens were more privileged than most.

Filipinos have long been used to this patent inequality and have no illusions about it. This is why not many made a big fuss over the privileges.

The argument therefore that pardon would promote national reconciliation is undermined by the experience in the leniency of Estrada's detention.

The leniency did not make Estrada more conciliatory with Ms Arroyo and did not cause him to abstain from involvement in plots to destabilize the administration, including the 2003 Oakwood mutiny by junior military officers.

Partisans restrained

Whether the decision would bring political stability depends on how soon Estrada supporters would accept that the decision has reduced him into a spent political force.

Indeed, Estrada, to his credit, restrained his partisans from taking to the streets to protest his conviction, counseling them that the courts of justice have spoken, although on first impulse, he denounced the court, saying, "This court was created to convict me."

By then, Estrada seems well aware of the reality that he could no longer summon mobs of his urban poor fanatics to storm Malacañang on the scale they did on May 1, 2001.

Ms Arroyo's main concern is that the decision would put an end to destabilization talk, but this is a forlorn hope. She said: "We live by the rule of law. We abide by what the courts of the land decide."

Her spokesperson said Ms Arroyo was "elated" and "vindicated" by the guilty verdict, and felt her administration would become more stable. Vindicated, but only up to a point.

First battle of legitimacy

The decision vindicated the legitimacy of her presidency from 2001 to 2004 because an acquittal would have undermined the Supreme Court decision of March 2001, which held that Ms Arroyo's accession to the presidency after Estrada vacated Malacañang following the civilian-military bloodless coup of Jan. 21 2001, was legitimate.

The Sandiganbayan closed that chapter of the first battle for legitimacy.

The second battle, which flared after the emergence of the "Hello Garci" tapes on the 2004 presidential election, is still being fought. It is fraught with volatility and risks of instability. Ms Arroyo is accused of rigging the presidential election in her favor. She has denied any wrongdoing.

The business community and the Arroyo administration fear instability most because it could unsettle the momentum of high economic growth.

This is part of what the businessmen call "a lot of hurdles" that stand in the way to sustained high economic growth. This is what made them cautious.

100 convicts want to serve Erap's term

From page A1

willingness to add Estrada's jail term to their own so they could serve it for him, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

In their letter addressed to Estrada, they proposed to divide among themselves the maximum 40-year jail term meted out to him by the Sandiganbayan, which convicted the deposed President of plunder last week.

"*Kung maaaring pahintulutan ng ating pamahalaan, nais sana namin maidagdag na lamang sa aming pagkakakulong ang parusang pang habangbuhay na sa inyo ay iginawad* (If our government would allow it, our wish is that your prison term just be added to our own)," they said in the letter read out to the INQUIRER by prison chaplain Robert Olaguer.

In effect, the 100 or so convicts would be serving an additional term of about five months each on behalf of Estrada.

The inmates' letter was neatly scribbled on three sheets of yellow pad, which Olaguer said he intended to mail to Estrada's rest house in Tanay, Rizal, where the ousted leader has been detained since 2004.

Although not a former death convict, ex-Calauan Mayor Antonio Sanchez—who was sentenced to life imprisonment for the rape-slay of Eileen Sarmenta, a University of the Philippines at Los Baños student, and the murder of her companion, Allan Gomez, in 1993—also signed the letter, according to the chaplain.

Irony of fate

The offer came as a surprise to Estrada, who—ironically and over the protests of human rights groups—saw to the execution by lethal injection of seven men, mostly rapists, during his term.

"*Ganoon na ba talaga ako nila kamahal? Nakakabagbag-damdamin naman* (Is that how much they love me? I am really touched)," Estrada said with a hearty laugh when the INQUIRER told him of the prisoners' letter.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division sentenced Estrada to reclusion perpetua, or a minimum of 20 years and a maximum of 40 years imprisonment.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon said the prisoners' wish might be a show of love for Estrada but was "not legally possible."

Absurd, nontransferable

"The sentence is personal. You can't say I'm giving someone the special power of attorney to serve my sentence," Fadullon said.

"The case is against a certain person. He alone is the one who must serve it. I think that proposition is absurd. It's an indication of their devotion to Mr. Estrada."

Olaguer said he would give a copy of the letter to the Church-run Radio Veritas for it to be read on the air.

"I told the inmates that their proposal was impossible but they said it was one way of showing their support for the former President," he said.

The inmates, currently incarcerated in the NBP's maximum security compound, were among the more than 100 convicts whose death sentences were commuted to life by Estrada while he was undergoing an impeachment trial at the Senate in December 2000.

The prisoners said in their letter they would protect Estrada from harm should the court decide to transfer him from Tanay to the cramped national penitentiary.

The boy Ticman

One of the signatories was Raul Ticman, who vividly recounted to Olaguer the time he was a boy in school and Estrada, then the mayor of San Juan, visited their school, bodily lifted him and handed him a Nutri-bun, a vitamin-fortified bread distributed to schoolchildren.

"He (Ticman) was really distraught after the promulgation of the verdict (on Estrada)," the priest said, adding that he saw Ticman crying under a tree after watching the live broadcast of the promulgation.

Another inmate who signed the letter was Eleuterio Dimapilis, who Olaguer said appeared in several movies with Estrada and the late Fernando Poe Jr. as a stunt man. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

'Last laugh will be ours'

"WE WILL HAVE THE LAST laugh. It will be the people who will celebrate in the end."

So said Joseph Estrada in light of Friday's "thanksgiving dinner" attended by the prosecutors and lawyers who helped build and win the plunder case against him.

Asked about the "Boracay Mansion" which the Sandiganbayan ordered forfeited to the government, Estrada said he had nothing to do with the now abandoned P142-million property.

He said he had merely "borrowed" it from businessman Jaime Dichaves, a coaccused, when his house at Wack-Wack was undergoing general repairs.

"I never owned that," Estrada said. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

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Rabies prompts state of calamity

DAGUPAN CITY—MAN'S BEST friend is causing a plague in Bauang, La Union, prompting officials to join hands in vaccinating all dogs in the town and neighboring areas due to the upsurge of rabies cases.

Provincial agriculturist Avelino Lomboy said the Bauang officials declared the town under a state of calamity after 95 people were reported to be infected with rabies. Three persons have died since January this year.

The most number of cases came from the villages of Central West and Parian West, Lomboy told the INQUIRER by telephone on Sunday.

The provincial government has vaccinated 450 dogs in the town while the Bauang government is ready to buy more antirabies vaccines, he said.

"We are undertaking massive antirabies vaccination, with personnel going around the villages giving dogs the needed shot," he said.

Lomboy said the provincial government had also asked the national government for more antirabies vaccines so they can undertake a province-wide vaccination.

He said there was no record of the number of rabid dogs because they were more focused on the people affected.

He said he put his dog to sleep after it was bitten by a rabid stray dog. "My dog got out of the gate and was bitten, so while it hurt, we had to kill it," he added.

Bauang has an ordinance prohibiting stray dogs. Penalty is P1,000 for every unconfined dog.

"But the local government is having a difficult time in implementing it," Lomboy said. He said a rabid dog is restless, red-eyed, with dripping saliva and is always moving. The dog can be exceptionally aggressive and may attack without provocation.

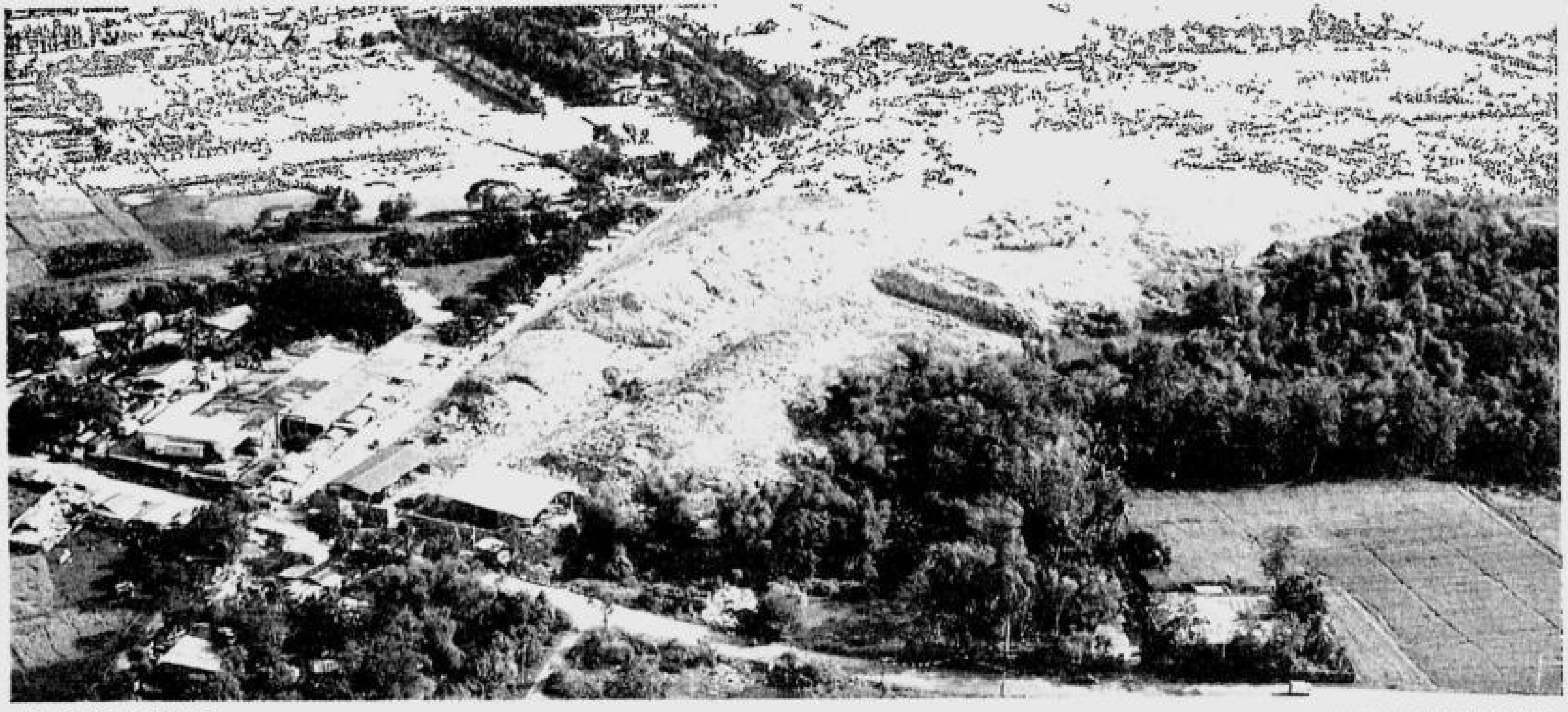
In Bulacan, officials in Bustos town have been pushing for a mandatory vaccination of pet dogs there to prevent rabies infection.

Mayor Carlito Reyes said the provincial board was seriously considering the town's proposal to have all dogs vaccinated.

Since the implementation of the town's antirabies program, a number of families refused to subject their pet dogs to vaccination, claiming that their pets became weak due to the effects of the medicines, he said.

A man died recently of rabies infection and 40 people were infected with rabies in Bustos.

Through a provincial board resolution, the Bustos local government placed Barangay Liciada under a state of calamity to facilitate the immediate release of funds for vaccination and medical needs of the residents who were infected with rabies. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*



BIOGAS POWER ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
The Iloilo City government is planning to convert the waste from this dump in Calajunan, Mandurriao, Iloilo City, into electricity with the proposed biogas generation facility that is expected to provide six megawatts power to the town. The initiative is proposed by the Philippine Bio Sciences Co. Inc.

Women start back-to-*bayong* drive in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

APALIT, PAMPANGA—OUT WITH PLASTIC bags. Go back to using *bayong*. Make the shift to protect the one world we live in.

Picking up that cause, the wives of 20 Pampanga mayors and Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo's spouse Angela began here on Sunday the distribution of at least 200,000 pieces of *bayong* or hand-woven rattan or *buri* bags throughout the province.

"*I suggest you start using the bayong kasi mas marami ang nailalagay at di na kailangang gumamit ng plastic bags* (because it can carry more items and you don't have to use plastic bags anymore)," said the usually timid Angela, the sweat from the morning's heat rolling down her face.

Arroyo turned up to show support to the advocacy of the Mayors' Responsible Spouses (MRS).

Arroyo came as did the mayors whose wives, though involved in civic causes, embarked collectively for the first time on this environmental protection campaign.

Television host and environment advocate Christine Bersola-Babao joined the launch at the public market, giving also a short talk on how plastic bags, if not reused or disposed of properly, hurt nature and people.

"Plastic bags produce toxic bits that pollute our water and soil. Sea mammals like dolphins and whales die when they eat plastics. Our rivers get clogged with plastics and worsen our floods," Bersola-Babao said.

Her pitch fits right in Pampanga, a flood-prone province. All waters from 30 rivers all over Central Luzon drain toward the Pampanga River before emptying into the Manila Bay.

The province's three major rivers are clogged with lahar, mainly composed of sand, from Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions.

To about 400 women who lined up to get their free *bayong*, Bersola-Babao showed them her own *bayong*, a shopping bag made out of earth-friendly synthetic stuff, a picture frame made out of recycled tetra packs and the children's book she wrote, "Basura Monster."

"I started using *bayong* when I was in high school. It's my personal little way of helping Mother Earth. I hope you also start using the *bayong*," Bersola-Babao told the crowd. They shouted in unison: "Yes!"

"*Wag tayo bili-tapon, bili-tapon* (Let's put an end to a cycle of discarding plastic bags)," she said, emphasizing her pitch for reduce-reuse-recycle approach in waste management.

MRS president Lani Pelayo, wife of Candaba Mayor Jerry Pelayo, cited a study that showed it takes 1,000 years for plastic bags to degrade.

"Did you know that 80 percent of the groceries and convenience stores all over the world packed goods in plastic bags? Between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide," Pelayo said, sharing a data she got from green groups on the Internet.

"We bought the *bayong* initially from Bicol. We bought those [using] our own money and some contributions from private groups. To sustain these and convince more families to turn to *bayong*, we are starting projects in making bags out of water lilies that abound in our rivers," Pelayo told the INQUIRER.

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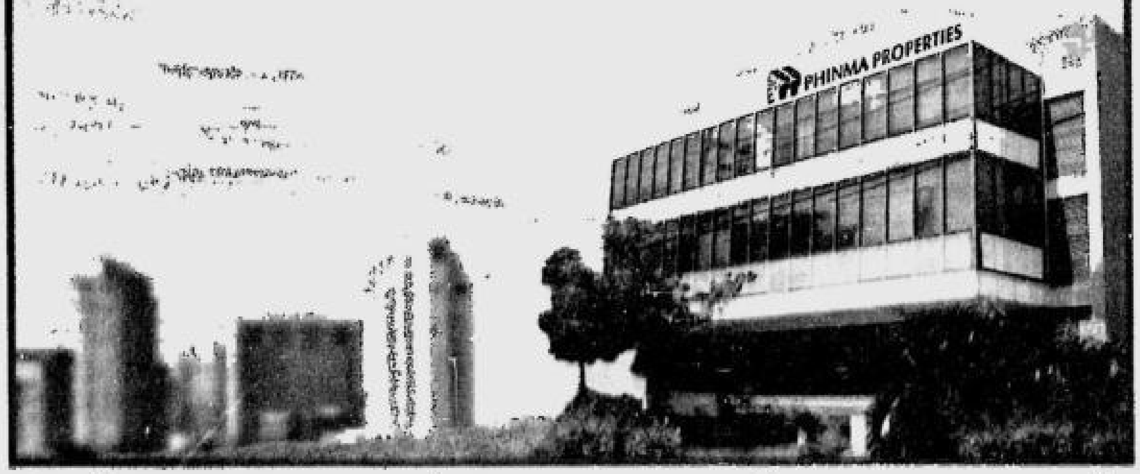

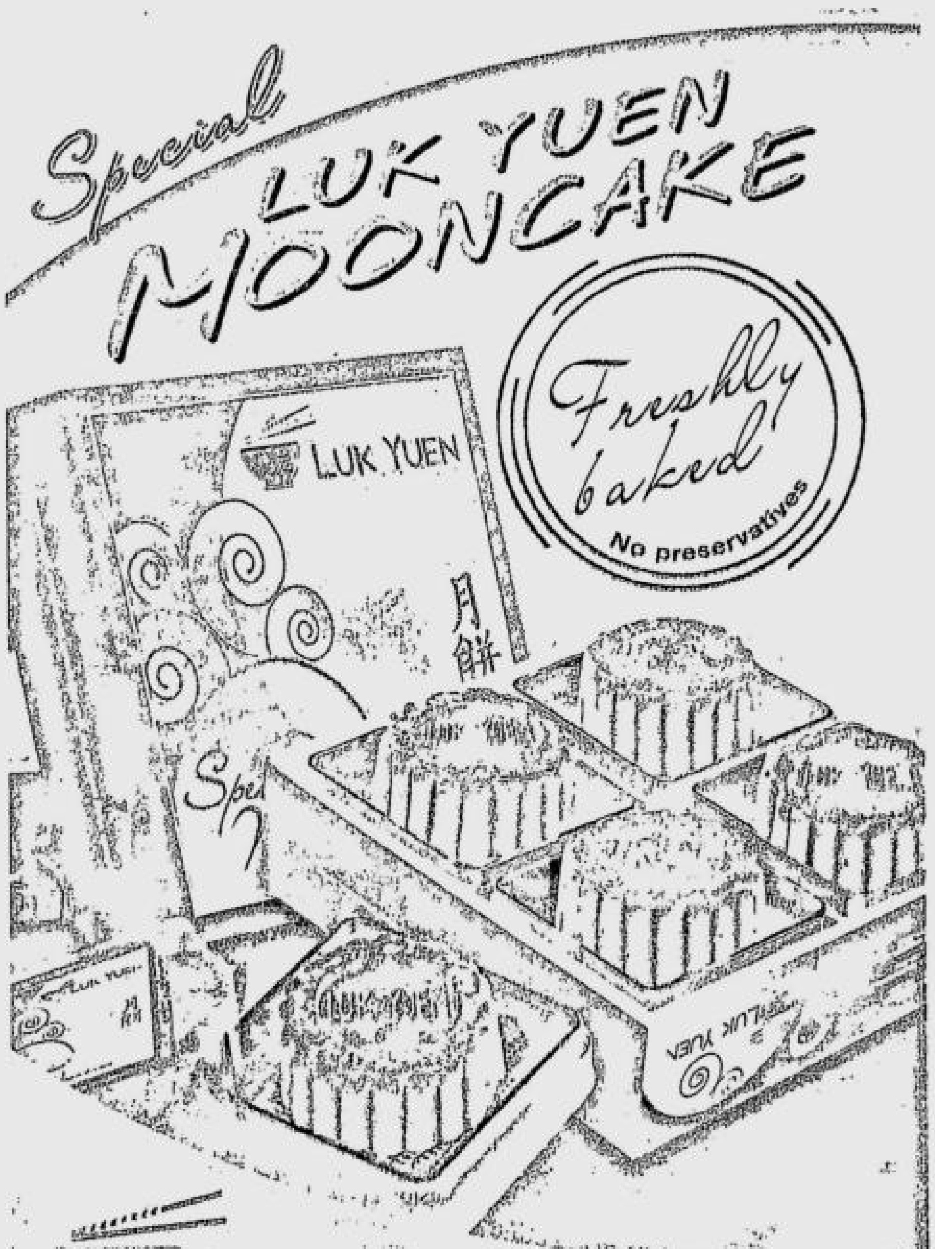

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Indigenous peoples laud new UN declaration

BAGUIO CITY—INDIGENOUS LEADERS and representatives have hailed as a "historic milestone" the adoption on Thursday of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said the declaration would pave the "building of partnerships between states and indigenous peoples for a more just and sustainable world."

"Sept. 13, 2007 will be remembered as ... a day that the United Nations and its member states, together with indigenous peoples, reconciled with painful histories and decided to march into the future on the path of human rights," Tauli-Corpuz said in a statement from the UN headquarters in New York.

Before the UN concluded its 61st General Assembly, 144 countries, including the Philippines, voted for the declaration, which indigenous representatives have helped draft and have been pushing to be adopted for the past 23 years.

Four countries (United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) voted against and 11 abstained.

"We are definitely happy [over the declaration's adoption], but it's a shame that four countries with significant indigenous populations have voted against it," Joan Carling, Philippine Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Watch coordinator, said.

The declaration, although non-binding, sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues.

It stresses the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations. These were also referred as the right to self-determination.

Discrimination

It also prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their "full and effective participation" in all matters that concern them, and their right to remain distinct and pursue their own visions of economic and social development.

The Human Rights Council adopted the declaration in June 2006, over the objections of some member states with sizeable indigenous populations.

The UN General Assembly deferred consideration of the text late last year at the behest of African countries, which raised objections about language on self-determination and the definition of "indigenous" people.

The new declaration is expected to serve as reference and framework by governments, UN agencies and the private sector in implementing what indigenous leaders call "a human rights-based approach to development" as it applies to indigenous peoples. *Maurice Malanes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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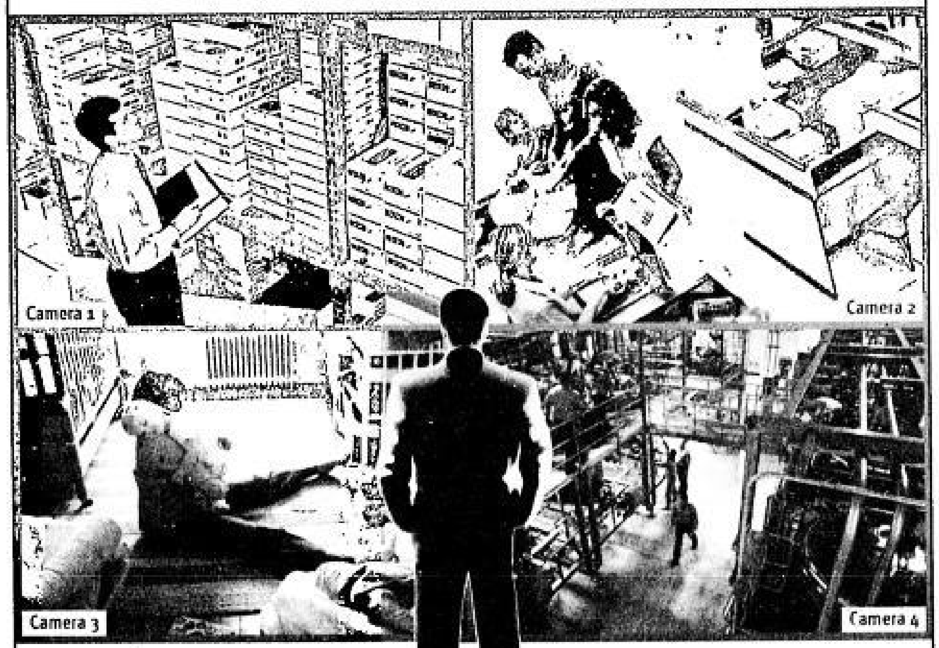

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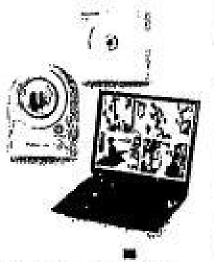

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MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. will conduct six major interconnection works of primary pipelines, as well as other operational maintenance works, in several portions of its concession to improve water supply to Manila, Pasay, Makati, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Cavite.

While the project is being implemented, water supply to the whole of Pasay, Las Piñas, Parañaque, and some areas of Makati, Manila and Cavite will be temporarily affected. A water service interruption will take place for 32 hours, starting at 1 a.m., Saturday, September 22, 2007, until 9:00 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 23, 2007.

The nature of the project involves the following:

Two interconnection works will be done in Manila (the 800-mm by 2200-mm Binondo line interconnection at Jaboneros St. corner Muelle dela Industria, and the 500-mm by 500-mm line interconnection inside the Anda Circle).

Another interconnection will be in Pasay (the 600-mm by 1050-mm line along Roxas Blvd. corner Russell St.).

In Parañaque City, three interconnections works and the insertion of a 450-mm butterfly valve on the existing 450-mm SP line will be done to complete the pipelaying activity along Sucat Road from Kabihasnan to Lopez.

Due to these simultaneous interconnection works, the following areas will have no water for 32 hours:

In Manila: Intramuros, Ermita, Paco and Malate.

In Pasay: San Isidro, San Jose, Sta. Clara, San Rafael, San Roque, Malibay and NAIA Area.

In Makati: Palanan, San Isidro, Bangkal and Magallanes

In Parañaque: Baclaran, Tambo, Don Galo, Sto. Nino, Merville, San Dionisio, Moon Walk, Sun Valley, San Isidro, San Martin de Porres and Marcelo Green.

In Las Piñas: Ilaya, Manuyo Uno, Poblacion, Pulang Lupa Uno, Talaba, Zapote, Pamplona, Pulang Lupa Dos and CAA.

In Cavite: portions of Bacoor and Imus.

To alleviate the water situation of affected residents, Maynilad will be deploying a total of 62 mobile water tankers. Affected customers are nonetheless advised to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption.

For more information, customers may call Maynilad Water Hotlines 1626 or 4362000, or text Maynilad 2898 for the water-rationing schedule.

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W. Visayas workers get P13 to P41 wage hikes

BACOLOD CITY—The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) on Sept. 12 approved a wage increase for Western Visayas ranging from P13 to P41 that is expected to take effect Oct. 1.

RTWPB labor representative Wennie Sancho said those who receive less will get a larger and staggered wage hike.

Those receiving wages of P222 a day, mainly those in the industrial/commercial sector will get an increase of P13 a day.

Those receiving P194 a day, involving those in the retail/service sector will be granted P41 hike on a staggered basis.

The first P15 daily wage increase will take effect upon the effectivity of the order; another P15 after six months; and P11 more on Sept. 30, 2008, Sancho said.

The new wage order would be submitted to the National Wages and Productivity Commission before implementation, labor representative John Peter Milan said. *Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Reimbursement of Guimaras cleanup slammed

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A FEDERATION OF FISHERfolk organizations has questioned the P118-million reimbursement given to Petron Corp. for the clean up of areas affected by the oil spill in Guimaras.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) also urged the London-based International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF), an inter-governmental agency compensating oil spill victims, to recall the reimbursement and use the amount to compensate the affected residents.

In a letter to IOPCF officials, Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said Petron should not be reimbursed for its expenses because the giant oil firm was allegedly responsible for the oil spill, considered the country's worst environmental disaster, when the MT Solar I sank in the waters of Guimaras on Aug. 11, 2006 and spilled around 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel.

The IOPCF said in a June 12, 2007 report of its executive committee that it had reimbursed P118 million to Petron Corp. for shoreline clean up. The oil firm had submitted a claim of P196 million.

Hicap noted that paying Petron for its expenses was "grossly immoral and totally unfair to the victims of Guimaras oil spill tragedy and "a direct assault to the people's quest for truth, justice and fair play."

He cited the Special Board of Marine Inquiry (SBMI), which investigated the sinking and oil spill, and found Petron liable for overloading the sunken vessel that contributed to the sinking of the tanker. Petron has repeatedly denied this allegation.

But the IOPCF defended the reimbursement. Capt. Patrick Joseph, IOPCF claims manager, said in a letter to Hicap dated Aug. 28, that the payments "were in respect of the costs incurred by Petron in conducting clean up operations, which could also be considered 'preventive measures' since they prevented further damage by contamination."

He said the cost incurred by Petron was scrutinized and compared with the information provided by experts appointed by the IOPCF and the insurance firm Shipowners' Club.

Joseph also pointed out that the payment was in accordance with the criterion and policies provided in the IOPCF's 1992 Fund Assembly.

But Hicap said the reimbursement almost absolved the company of any violation and, instead, relegated it to a status of a victim, rather than a principal offender.

He said the P118 million should better put into use by giving it to all the victims of the oil spill.

The IOPCF has paid a total of P169.9 million to 22,644 claimants. But there were still pending claims from affected sectors.

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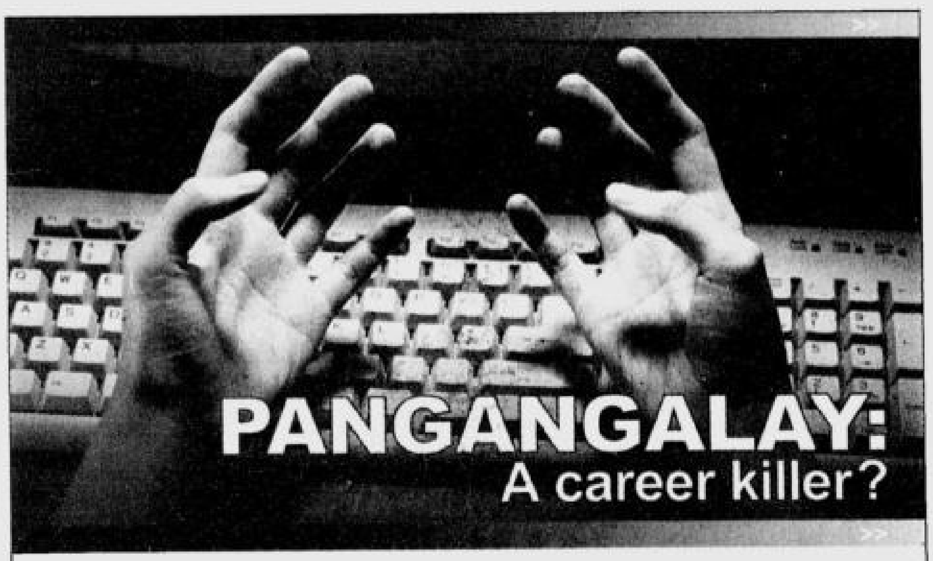

PANGANGALAY:
A career killer?

"Naalala ko pa noong una ko 'long naramdaman," sabi ni Donna, isang 30 year-old secretary. "It was late, around eight o'clock, pero may tinatapos pa ako sa office. I'd been typing the whole day, then biglang nangalay ako. Grabe, naging stiff talaga ang mga kamay ko! 'Di ko matapos-tapos yung pag-type ko."

Ilang buwang tiniis ito ni Donna. Pabalik-balik ang matinding pangangalay at pamamanhid.

Minsan pa nga'y may kasama pang lower back pains ito. "Since I was always sitting down, my back would hurt. Hassle talaga. Minsan nagsasabay pa ang dalawa."

Hindi nagtagal, naapektuhan ang trabaho ni Donna. "Sinisita ako ng boss ko dahil ang bagal ko raw magtrabaho. Eh ang sakit talaga mag-encode. Kailangan talaga dahan-dahan."

Napadalas ang pag-OT ni Donna para habulin ang tumatambak niyang trabaho. Kaya naman lalong lumala ang mga problema niya sa katawan.

"Isang beses sumabit ako sa deadline. Galit na galit ang boss ko. I thought I was going to get fired."

Dahil dito, nagpatingin na si Donna sa doktor. Sinabi ng doktor na ang paulit-ulit na pagkilos at stress sa isang parte ng katawan ay pwedeng maging sanhi ng "nerve compression" o pag-ipit ng ugat. Kung may kasamang kakulangan ng B-complex sa diet, maaaring mangyari ang pangangalay o 'pamamanhid.

"Minsan kasi 'di ako nakakapag-almusal 'pag nagmamadaling pumasok," ayon kay Donna. "Tapos 'pag sobrang daming work, I have a quick lunch lang. Sabi ni Doc malamang kulang nga daw ako sa B-complex. So he prescribed B-Complex vitamins. Sabi niya it would help heal the damaged nerves na nagdulot ng pangangalay."

Kaya inumpisahan ni Donna mag-Pharex B Protected araw-araw. Nagulat siya sa epekto nito. 'Di nagtagal, nawala ang pangangalay ng mga kamay niya pati na rin ang sakit sa kanyang likod.

"Ang galing ng Pharex B Protected! Umayos ang trabaho ko. Kaya na-promote ako."

"Sinisita ako ng boss ko dahil ang bagal ko raw magtrabaho."

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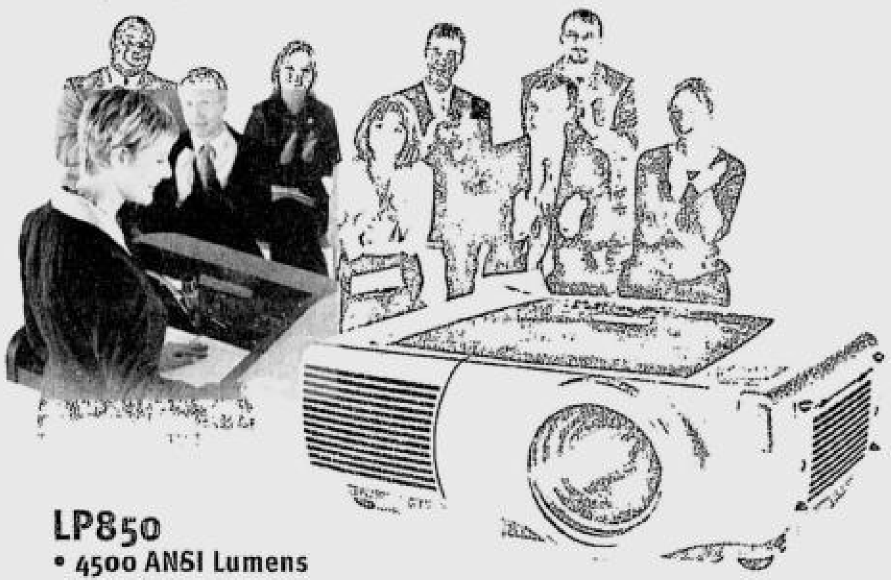

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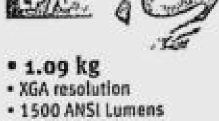

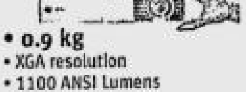

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Philippine National Oil Company ("PNOC"), through the Privatization Committee of PNOC ("PRIVACOM"), invites interested parties to pre-qualify and to bid ("Bidding") for shares in PNOC Energy Development Corporation ("PNOC EDC") held by PNOC and certain shareholders, which shares collectively represent 60% of the outstanding capital stock of PNOC EDC (the "Shares"), as follows:

Class of Share	No. of Shares	% of Total Outstanding
Common	6,000,000,000	26.67%
Preferred	7,500,000,000	33.33%

An interested party or its duly authorized agent must submit a Letter of Intent ("LOI") to the PRIVACOM, stating such interested party's intention to participate in the Bidding of the Shares and indicating such interested party's or agent's full name, address, telephone and fax number, and the name of its principal contact person. The LOI must be signed by the interested party's or the agent's authorized representative.

LOIs may be submitted to the PRIVACOM beginning 9:00 a.m. on 20 September 2007 but in any event no later than 12:00 noon on 24 September 2007. Only an interested party that, on its own or through its agent, submits a LOI ("Prospective Bidder") by this deadline shall be allowed to participate further as a bidder in the Bidding. Upon submission of the LOI, the PRIVACOM shall furnish the Prospective Bidders the initial pre-qualification guidelines as well as the form of the Confidentiality Agreement and Undertaking.

Beginning on 21 September 2007, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the Bidding Rules & Procedures shall be made available by PRIVACOM to Prospective Bidders.

A pre-bid conference for Prospective Bidders shall be held at 2:00 p.m. on 24 September 2007 at the 7th Floor, PNOC Mini-Theatre, PNOC Building VI, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Prospective Bidders shall submit to the PRIVACOM on or before 5:00 p.m. on 05 October 2007 the initial pre-qualification requirements, including the duly executed Confidentiality Agreement and Undertaking, in order to be considered for pre-qualification. The PRIVACOM shall announce the Pre-qualified Bidders on or around 10 October 2007.

Upon payment by the Pre-qualified Bidder to PNOC of a non-refundable Participation Fee in the amount of Five Thousand U.S. Dollars (US$5,000.00) on 11 October 2007 and 12 October 2007, the Pre-qualified Bidder shall be furnished by the PRIVACOM with the Draft Transaction Documents, the Information Package and Due Diligence Procedures. Only Pre-qualified Bidders shall be given the opportunity to conduct due diligence on the Shares and on PNOC EDC which shall start no later than 15 October 2007, in accordance with the Due Diligence Procedures.

To allow the PRIVACOM an opportunity to qualify the Pre-qualified Bidders or any consortium as may be allowed to be formed in accordance with the Bidding Rules & Procedures ("Consortium"), each Pre-qualified Bidder or Consortium must submit the Final Qualification Documents as may be required by the PRIVACOM no later than 7:00 pm on 26 October 2007.

Pre-qualified Bidders and Consortia that pass the final qualification ("Qualified Bidders") must submit their Bids together with any other documents as may be required by the PRIVACOM on or before 9:00 a.m. on 21 November 2007 to the Chairman of the PRIVACOM, c/o Ms. Celia R. Tagaro, Ph.D., at the Ground Floor, PNOC Building VI, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The PRIVACOM reserves the right to disqualify any party should it determine that any submission by such party is not accurate, truthful, complete, authentic, and/or compliant with the Bidding Rules & Procedures and any Supplemental Bid Bulletins issued in connection with the Bidding.

The PRIVACOM reserves the right to reject any and all LOIs, initial pre-qualification requirements, final qualification requirements, Bids and other documents required to be submitted in the course of the Bidding, or to declare a failure of Bidding, or not to proceed with the sale of the Shares, or to annul the Bidding at any time prior to the notice of award, or to waive any required formality in the Bids received or defects therein, or to accept such Bid as may be considered most advantageous to the government, without giving any reason therefor and without incurring any liability to the affected Bidders. PRIVACOM does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for expenses or losses that they may incur in connection with the Bidding, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

The PRIVACOM reserves the right to change the schedule in relation to the Bidding and all other deadlines set by the PRIVACOM ("Bidding Schedule") without prior notice. Bidders shall be promptly notified of any change in the Bidding Schedule through a Supplemental Bid Bulletin. The PRIVACOM furthermore reserves the right to amend, revise, supplement, modify, or clarify the Bidding Rules & Procedures through Supplemental Bid Bulletins. Upon the issuance of a Supplemental Bid Bulletin, the same shall automatically be incorporated into and made an integral part of the Bidding Rules & Procedures.

Unless otherwise expressly specified in writing, all references to times and dates above shall refer to Manila time. Should any of the dates fall on a holiday, the date or deadline shall be extended to the same time on the next succeeding Business Day. Unless otherwise indicated, the venue of all of the above activities shall be at the office of the PRIVACOM at the Ground Floor, PNOC Building VI, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

LOIs, inquiries and clarifications pursuant to this invitation to pre-qualify and to bid shall be addressed and submitted to:

Chairman of the PRIVACOM
c/o Ms. Celia Tagaro, Ph.D.
PRIVACOM Secretariat
Ground Floor, PNOC Building VI Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City Tel. No. (632) 840 1442 Fax. No. (632) 840 1441 E-mail: crtagaro@pnoc.com.ph

(Sgd.) ANTONIO M. CAILAO
Chairman, PRIVACOM
President & CEO, PNOC

Imelda in hospital gets rumor mill going

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Kenneth M. del Rosario

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA Marcos checked into St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City Saturday night apparently for her annual medical checkup and for what a former aide, Sol Vanzi, described as "ailing knees."

But Agence France-Presse in a photo release reported that Marcos was to undergo an angiogram to find out if she had coronary artery disease.

People close to Marcos quickly dismissed this as untrue and said it was simply one of the procedures she must undergo as part of her checkup.

This, however, did not stop her supporters from gathering outside the hospital to pray and offer songs for her quick recovery. They carried pictures of the former first lady and the Philippine flag.

"I don't think [that she is really ill]," said a woman who was about to enter the presidential suite where Marcos was confined.

The woman was later identified by one of Marcos' aides as Baby Locsin.

"This is only part of her executive checkup," the woman had said.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Marcos' attending physician, Dr. Joven Cuanang, medical director of St. Luke's and a neurologist, but the doctor was not in his office.

The room where angiograms—basically X-rays that show what is going on with the heart—are done was closed yesterday.

A bodyguard stationed outside Marcos' room said that she was in for a checkup and was scheduled to go home today.

"If it were serious, her children would be here right now," said the bodyguard, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said Marcos' son, Ferdinand Jr., was in London while daughter, Irene, was in the United States. Eldest Imee, on the other hand, was "somewhere in the Philippines."

The bodyguard said Marcos was accompanied by her sister, a Ms Yap, and her adopted daughter, Aimee.

SUPPORTERS of former first lady Imelda Marcos rushed to St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City to offer songs and prayers for her quick recovery upon hearing that she was at the hospital. AFP

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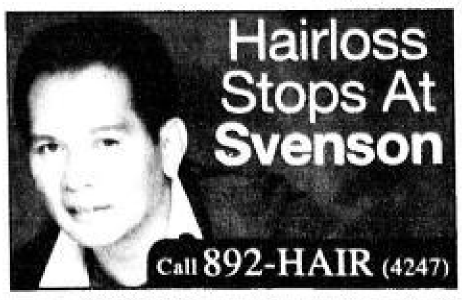


Tighter watch on oil depot, US Embassy

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT HAS FORMED TWO TASK FORCES to protect two of the city's vital installations—the Pandacan oil depot and the United States Embassy—from possible attacks to be launched by terrorist groups.

An order issued recently by acting MPD director Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa called for the creation of Task Force Pandacan and Task Force US Embassy to guard the two installations.

Task Force Pandacan will be headed by Supt. Efren Perez while Task Force US Embassy will be led by Supt. Edgar Cabrera Danao. The two officials will each have under their supervision eight minor task groups.

Abarzosa said in his order that the formation of the two task forces was part of the contingency plan for the security and protection of the two structures against possible "attacks, sabotage operations by the Abu Sayyaf Group, communist terrorist movements, Muslim extremists, international terrorists with links to local groups, organized crime groups, and other lawless elements."

"Recent developments indicate that the ASG, other extremists and communist groups, and the Alex Boncayao Brigade are still major threats to the security of the country," the order, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, said.

Any disruption in the operations of the three oil companies (Petron, Chevron and Shell) in the depot "can paralyze the whole of Metro Manila or the entire act of governance," it added.

The Pandacan oil depot supplies about 50 percent of Luzon's fuel requirements and more than 80 percent of the metropolis' diesel and gasoline requirements.

Abarzosa said that the "possibilities of sudden attacks and sabotage operations to the Pandacan oil depot... and the US Embassy... could not be discounted."

The Supreme Court has yet to make a final ruling on the petition to shut down the oil depot and move it to an area where it would not pose a threat to residents.

The US Embassy, on the other hand, is a favorite of protesters. Just recently, activists tried to hold a rally in front of the embassy to protest the detention of Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison at The Hague. He was released last week.

ROAD WIDENING PROJECT GONE PFFT
Jas, 22, of Navotas City sent this text message: "Parked trailers and huge trucks block the newly renovated Dalagang Bukid Street near the boundary of Malabon and Navotas cities. This does not only make the already widened road narrow, but also creates an opportunity for holdup men to attack unsuspecting passersby." JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

METRO Citizen's call 0918-8985566

Calling Maynilad!

Makailang ulit ko nang tinawag ang pansin ng Maynilad *tungkol sa isang bungkal sa kalye* Camarin Road *malapit sa amin sa* Hillcrest Village *na gawa ng isang walang pakundangang* contractor *nila na walang habas na huhukay sa kalye at hahayaan ang bungkal pag tapos na ang trabaho nila. Matagal nang reklamo ng mga dumadaang motorista ang pesteng bungkal sa kalye dahil nakasisira ng kanilang sasakyan. Salamat sa inyong tulong* (I have called the attention of Maynilad several times to a digging on Camarin Street near Hillcrest Village where we live. This is caused by a careless contractor who just abandons the digging after his crew's work is done. Motorists have also complained about this because of the damage done to their vehicles. Thanks for your help).

Dr. Angelito Baloy, 46, Camarin, Caloocan City

Video shop admits kids

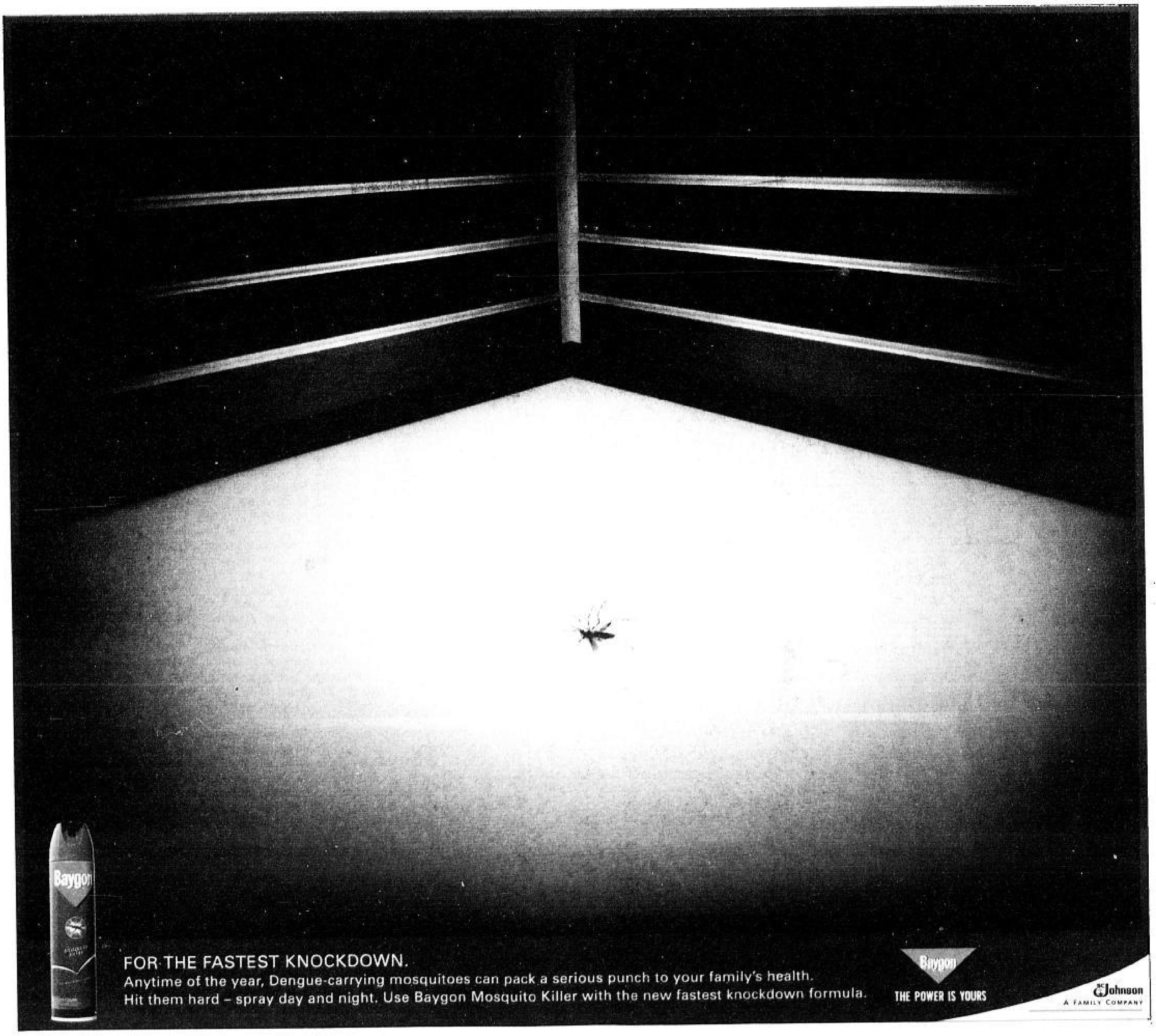
A video games shop located on the 2nd floor of Times Plaza, corner Taft Avenue and UN Avenue, allows schoolchildren to play video games during school days. I was there at 10:15 a.m. last Thursday, Sept. 6, and saw students from Araullo High School and grade school pupils from Montessori Villager's school in Quezon City there. Yet there were signs saying that all grade school and high school students in uniform are not allowed to play there according to a city ordinance.

L. Castañeda, 50, Makati City

Where's the garbage man?

Dalawang beses lang sa isang linggo kinokolekta ang basura dito. Bulok na ang mga ito bago kunin. Sana kunin araw-araw. (The garbage collectors come only twice a week in our area. The garbage is already rotting by the time they drop by. We hope it is collected daily.)

Riza de Leon, 50, Dolores Street, Malate, Manila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MMDA flood control project results in heavy traffic on Edsa

By DJ Yap

THOUGH IT WAS A SUNDAY, TRAFFIC crawled at a snail's pace in some parts of Edsa yesterday as personnel of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority dug holes on the sidewalk to lay drainage pipes in line with its flood control project.

Motorists, who were not warned about the obstruction, had to endure bumper-to-bumper traffic, particularly on the southbound lane in Quezon City.

From lunchtime until well into the afternoon, traffic was heaviest at the site of the diggings—the southbound lane at the corner of Edsa and Scout Borromeo Street, and Main Avenue—according to the MMDA Metrobase.

The southbound lane of Shaw Boulevard was also clogged but this was due largely to potholes, Metrobase said.

But elsewhere on Edsa, the flow of vehicles was smooth.

MMDA Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group head Roberto Esquivel said the digging and pipe-laying would involve the entire stretch and both lanes of Edsa and was expected to be finished by today.

"Anyway, the materials are ready so it'll be finished in no time. In the meantime, everyone just has to put up with it a little more," he said in a phone interview.

"We have to do this so that whether it's sunny or rainy, traffic will flow smoothly. This will be good for the traffic situation in the long run," Esquivel added.

According to the MMDA official, the laying of pipes would be done in areas that are prone to flooding whenever there is a heavy downpour.

A similar project is planned on the stretches of Osmeña Highway and Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati, he added.

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NOT A FILM LIBRARY

No, it isn't a film library or cinema house where memorabilia fans can catch flicks made by or starring Ramon Revilla Sr. and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., who were movie stars before they became senators of the Republic. The function hall on Aguinaldo Highway, Bacoor in Cavite is owned by Bong's younger brother, Bacoor Mayor Strike Revilla. It is a venue for memorable and once-in-a-lifetime occasions like weddings, baptismal and birthdays, conferences and other gatherings. SANTIAGO R. ALCANTARA

Acting Manila police director still waiting for transfer papers

By Allison W. Lopez

ACTING MANILA POLICE District (MPD) director, Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, yesterday confirmed his transfer to the Philippine National Police Academy in Silang, Cavite.

He clarified, however, that he was only informed verbally by some PNP officials about his new post and that he has yet to receive a transfer order.

"So far, *wala pa naman itong panibagong* order. *Yun naman ay kung anong magiging kapasiyahan ng ating nakakataas* (So far, there's no new order yet. It will depend on the decision of my superior)," said Abarzosa.

"*Kung ano naman ang maging kapasiyahan, susundin natin. Natural lang naman na ma*-assign *tayo sa ibang* office *para lumawak pa ang ating kaalaman* (Whatever will be their decision, I will abide by it. It's only natural that I would be assigned to another office to broaden my knowledge)," he added.

Since July, it has been reported that Abarzosa would be appointed the director of the PNPA in Silang, Cavite.

This was even confirmed by PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon who said that the MPD chief's transfer was part of the "usual" reshuffle of officers.

One of the names that cropped up as his replacement was Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, Southern Police District director.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, however, said that he wanted Abarzosa to stay on because "he's doing a good job."

The MPD chief told the INQUIRER that Lim, who has given him his vote of confidence, informed him that he wanted his promotion to chief superintendent to be finalized before he was transferred.

He also thanked Lim for giving him the chance to continue serving at MPD and added that it was an "honor to serve the National Capital Region Police Office, especially in Manila where Malacañang and the US Embassy are located."

Abarzosa admitted that it has been a "big challenge" to be at the helm of MPD, where several vital installations are located, but given a choice, he would rather stay on as chief of the capital city's police.

Abarzosa was appointed officer in charge of the MPD in Aug. 2006.

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Paper boys in top shape as they deliver the news

By Jeannette I. Andrade

PEDRO SADUESTE WAS IN the thick of the grueling Tour of Luzon biking competition 42 years ago when tragedy struck.

A truck ran over a group of bikers, including Sadueste, in Bulacan. Four men died. Sadueste survived but was fitted with a steel cap on his head, a constant reminder of his brush with death.

Now 60 years old, Sadueste still rides his bike, this time to deliver newspapers to Marikina City residents, a job he has been doing for the last 30 years.

"*Kailangang kumita. Kailangang walang palya ang pagbebenta ng diyaryo para kumita. Kahit magkasakit, hindi puedeng tumigil* (I need to sell newpapers to earn money. Even if I get sick, I can't stop)," Sadueste, *Mang* Pedro to friends, said.

He is one of many newspaper delivery people who have availed of free medical services provided by the INQUIRER in partnership with United Laboratories. The pharmaceutical firm, through Transfarma Unilab Consumer Health representatives Delia Almenzor and Augusto Cristi Jr., donated vitamins, food supplements and medicines.

The weekly medical missions conducted in selected areas in Metro Manila and key cities outside the metropolis, are part of the "Partner ko, Alaga ko" project of the INQUIRER's circulation department, with volunteers from different nursing schools and hospitals.

One recent Saturday morning, the INQUIRER and its partners went to Cubao, Quezon City. Sadueste was there, along with around 150 other newspaper vendors, their dependents and some residents in the area.

Sadueste said it was the second time he availed of the mission's free medical checkup. He also brought along his son. "*Malaking tulong ang mga ganitong bagay sa amin. Asikasong-asikaso kami. Menos gastos pa sa pang-araw araw* (This is a big help to us. We are well taken care of. We also save money for our daily expenses)," he said.

Dio Pinco, 33, who has been selling newspapers for 25 years, told the INQUIRER the medical missions were a big help because apart from being free, doctors go to them instead of the other way around.

"*Bukod sa libre lahat, hindi na namin kailangang magpunta pa kung saan-saan* (Apart from the fact that everything is free, we don't have to go anywhere)," Pinco said.

"It is not hard to stand in line. It is easy to undergo the examination. Everyone is accommodating. The medicine and checkups are free and we also get free snacks," said Pinco, who brought his young niece along for a checkup.

Francis Gopez of the INQUIRER circulation department explained that the weekly medical missions were not exclusively for newspaper vendors. "We cannot turn people away just because they are not newspaper vendors. The medical service we provide them is also free but, of course, since the project is intended for our partners, the newspaper vendors get priority," he said.

Gopez said the project would not be possible without Unilab and the volunteers. "We have nurse volunteers from different schools and doctors from several hospitals who have been with us since we started this project in June," he said.

Dawn Escarte, 22, a nursing graduate of St. Paul University who was among the first volunteers, said that participating in the project was very fulfilling.

"I meet news vendors on the street and they know me. They remember me from the mission," Escarte said.

PEDRO Sadueste, one of the INQUIRER's partners, makes his way home after completing his paper route. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Cooperate, mayor tells BF Homes residents

By DJ Yap

IN ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE water woes ailing BF Homes Subdivision, Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bernabe advised village leaders to file petitions to allow the Maynilad Water Services to take over the water supply and distribution in the subdivision.

Bernabe said 10 associations representing 10,000 homeowners were all that were needed to keep the petition rolling, but added that it would be better if all 50 associations participate.

Ten have already presented their petitions before the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems, but more are expected to follow in the coming days.

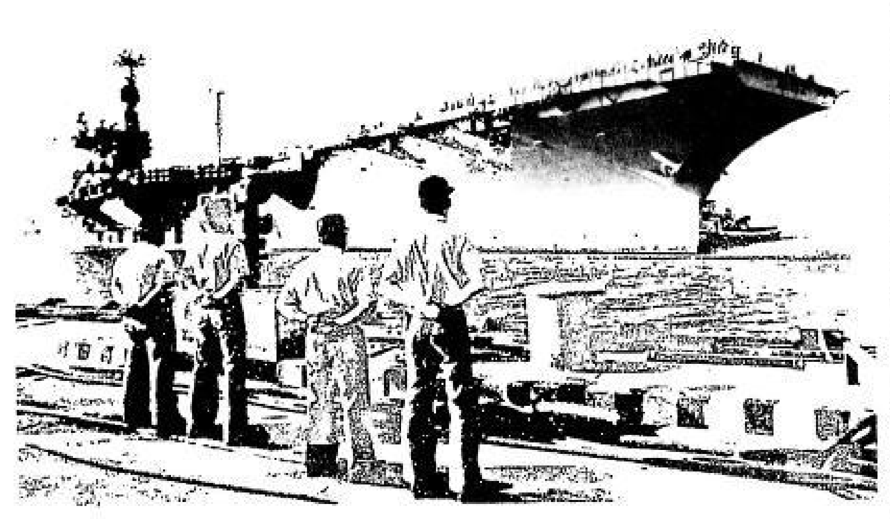
On Saturday, Bernabe met with the 24 homeowners' association leaders, as well as representatives from Maynilad and city officials, in an effort to resolve the longstanding problem.

Among those present were Maynilad business manager Regino Cruz, technical services manager Fred Alilain, zone head Ed Dimapilis, city administrator Nelson de Jesus, special services officer Dean Calleja and legal officer Jose Torrefranca.

For years, BF Homes has lacked potable water supply, prompting residents to buy water from delivery companies at much higher rates.

Bernabe said he was trying his best to solve the problem but added that the cooperation of the residents was sorely needed.

Vice President Noli de Castro, who was invited, could not make it to the meeting, but Bernabe said De Castro had promised to take up the matter directly with President Macapagal-Arroyo.



DID YOU KNOW

ON SEPT. 16, 1991, the Senate voted 12-11 to reject a new bases agreement which would extend the stay of American troops in the Subic Naval Base in exchange for hundreds of million of dollars in aid. The vote ended centuries of foreign military presence in the country.

Those who voted for the expulsion of the bases were then Senate President Jovito Salonga, Senators Joseph Estrada, Agapito Aquino, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona Jr., Sotero Laurel, Ernesto Maceda, Orlando Mercado, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Rene Saguisag, Wigberto Tañada and Victor Ziga.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Scientists bring bad breath out of closet

(Reprinted with the written permission from Reuters, Times Square New York)

CHICAGO—On the list of social offenses, bad breath ranks right there with flatulence and body odor.

And while store shelves are well-stocked with remedies ranging from chewing gum and mouthwash to breath strips and drops, researchers are just starting to understand the science of bad breath.

"It's a taboo," said Patricia Lenton, a clinical researcher at the University of Minnesota's School of Dentistry. "You are typecast as the smelly person."

Lenton was one of nearly 200 scientists who attended the International Conference on Breath Odor Research this week in Chicago. Attendees ranged from dentists, chemists and microbiologists to psychologists and even flavor researchers.

Natural flavors

Their research ran the gamut from studies on the most effective natural flavors for treating bad breath—cinnamon is a good choice—to the development of an artificial nose for sniffing out oral malador and links between exhaled air and disease.

"We want to advance the science in this field," said Christine Wu, a researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Dentistry, who helped organize the conference.

"In dental research, bad breath is neglected because it is not a disease that will kill people," Wu said in an interview. "But it's a huge problem. Everybody suffers from bad breath at one point in their lifetime."

For most, bad breath occurs when bacteria in the mouth breaks down proteins, producing volatile surfur compounds that make for foul smelling breath.

Dry mouth, tooth decay, certain prescription drugs, sinus problems, even diseases like diabetes may cause bad breath.

Most bad breath originates in the mouth, and about 90 percent of the smell comes from the tongue, according to Lenton.

"It's warm. It's moist. It's like a large incubator of bacteria," she said.

Lenton said good oral care is the best weapon for routine bad breath.

Regular brushing, flossing

She recommends regular brushing and flossing, a tongue scraper to remove bacteria from the back of the tongue, and a final rinse with antibacterial mouthwash.

For some, however, it is not actual bad breath that's the problem.

According to Lenton, anywhere from 4-17 percent of the people who seek treatment for breath odor are convinced they have bad breath—even though they do not.

Halitophobia

It is a condition some refer to as halitophobia, or the fear of bad breath, and it can interfere with daily life.

"It's an obsessive compulsive disorder," Lenton said. "There have been documented cases in Japan of people commiting suicide from this."

Lenton and Wu hope the conference and others like it will raise the profile of breath research.

"In our culture, it's a difficult thing to talk about," Lenton said. *Reuters*

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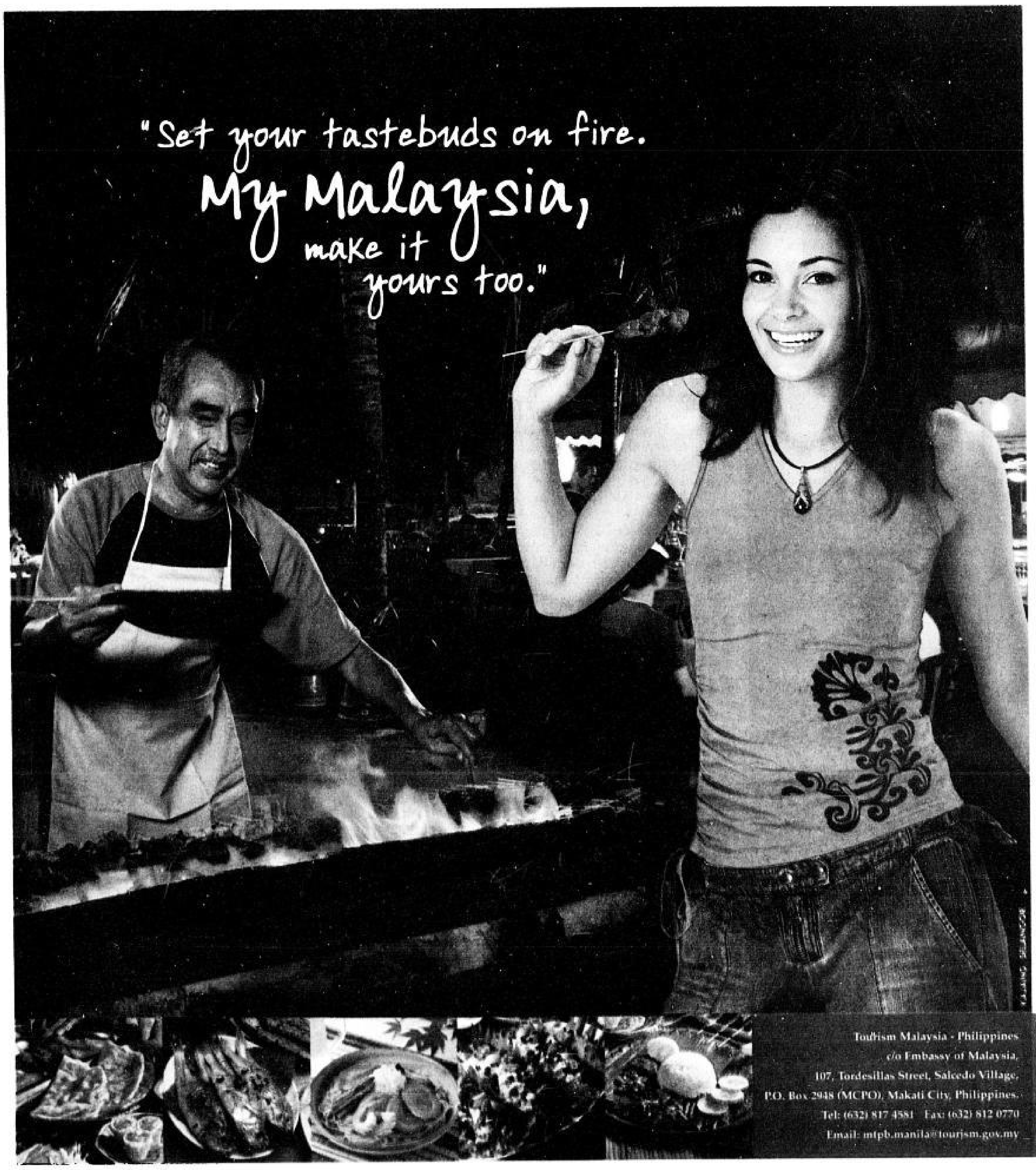

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Flood-resistant rice offers hope to B'desh farmers

DHAKA—A NEW STRAIN OF rice may be able to resist floods that destroy vast tracts of paddy fields in Bangladesh each year, offering hope to millions of poor farmers, researchers say.

The farmers lose their rice crops when fields are submerged by annual floods triggered when rivers, fed by heavy monsoon rains and melting Himalayan glaciers, burst their banks.

The rice type, called Swarna Submergence 1, developed by the Manila-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), proved to be flood resistant in trials this year in northern Bangladesh, researchers said.

Normal rice varieties cannot survive being submerged by floodwater for more than three days, resulting in huge losses for farmers.

But "last month when the floodwater receded from two farms in which Swarna Sub-1 was planted, we saw the rice paddy stand up again, 10 days after it was completely submerged by water," said senior researcher Abdul Mazid.

"It was simply amazing. It means the variety has proved flood-resistant. It could be a huge step toward helping millions of rice farmers who are made paupers by floods," said Mazid of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

Low-lying Bangladesh, crisscrossed by 230 rivers, experiences flooding every year. Experts say the floods are one of the main reasons why 40 percent of the country's 140 million population live in dire poverty.

Rice production accounts for 14 percent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product. Some two-thirds of Bangladesh's 144 million population directly or indirectly derive their living from rice farming.

"If the floodwater stays two to three days, it is a blessing. It nourishes the soils. But if it stays longer, it destroys the crops," said IRRI liaison scientist Hamid Mia.

This year alone rice worth $290 million was damaged in one the worst floods in nearly a decade in July, according to preliminary estimates.

The government said the losses would climb following a second spell of flooding in early September that has submerged more than a third of the country.

Swarna Sub-1 was invented in 2004 after IRRI researchers implanted a submergence-resistant gene in a massively popular high-yielding Indian rice variety through conventional breeding.

"The idea was to give the farmers a variety that can survive floodwater for 10 to 17 days while at the same time ensuring them a more than average yield," said Mia.

With support from Swiss charity Inter Corp., BRRI distributed seeds and seedlings of the submergence-resistant rice variety to 114 farmers across nine districts in the country.

"The field tests have so far yielded very good results. The farmers are excited and want more seeds and seedlings," said Mazid.

"Next year, we will quadruple the number of testing farms. And hopefully, by 2009-2010, we can start commercial production of the flood-resistant rice," he added. *AFP*

Ex-Chechen official held in reporter's death

MOSCOW—RUSSIAN INVESTIGATORS arrested a former Chechen official on Thursday and accused him of organizing the contract killing of Anna Politkovskaya, the independent journalist and high-profile Kremlin critic, a Russian newspaper and Politkovskaya's former editor said Saturday.

The suspected official, Shamil D. Burayev, was detained in Moscow. Burayev was once the leader of Achkhoi-Martan, one of the administrative districts in Chechnya, but was dismissed from the post several years ago.

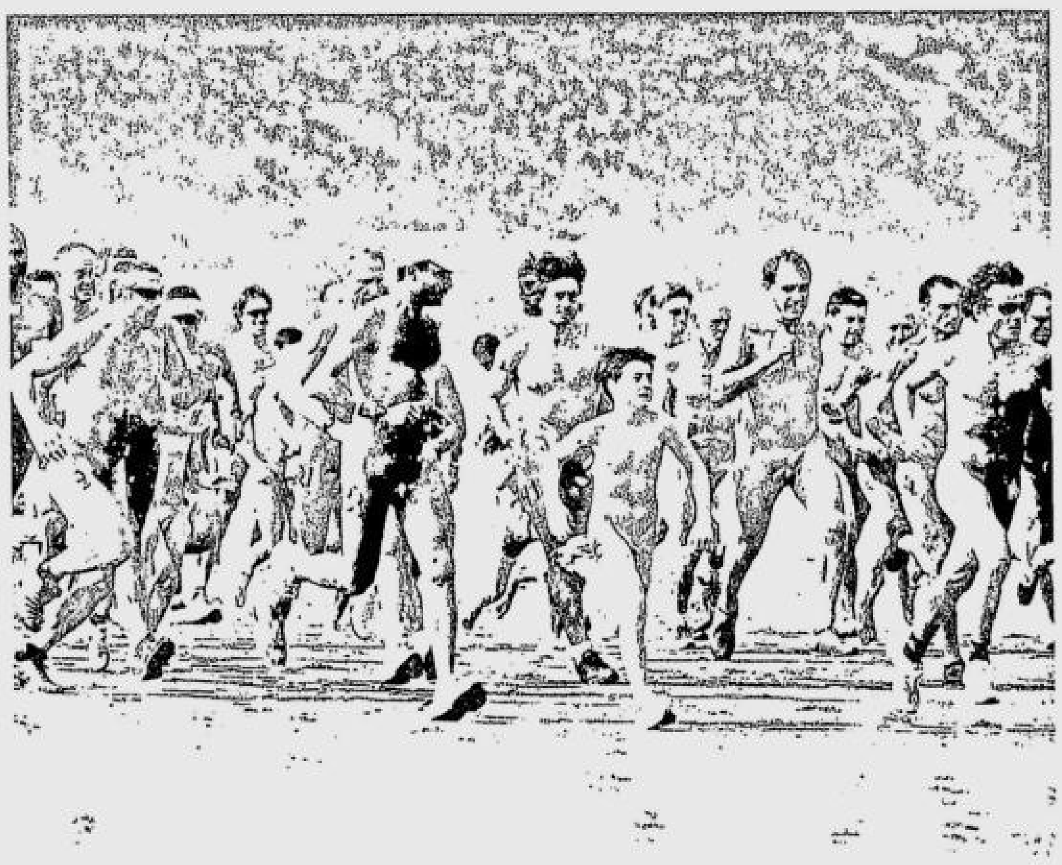
He also ran unsuccessfully for the Chechen presidency in 2003. The Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, which reported his arrest, said that he had been accused under Russian law of organizing a murder, and suggested that he had ordered Politkovskaya's killing.

Politkovskaya, 48, was fatally shot at the entrance to her apartment building last October. She had earned international recognition as one of the most vocal of Russia's remaining critics of President Vladimir V. Putin, but had been criticized in Russian government circles for her reporting on official brutality and crime in the two wars in Chechnya since 1994.

Her colleagues and friends have said she was killed to silence her or in retaliation for past articles; they have also said they suspected an official hand in her death.

Prosecutors could not be reached by telephone on Saturday. But Dmitri A. Muratov, the editor in chief of Novaya Gazeta, the newspaper for which Politkovskaya worked, confirmed the arrest by telephone.

One of Burayev's relatives also told the Interfax news agency that Burayev was in police custody, but added that "we were told at first that he could be released soon," Interfax reported. *NYT*



THEY'RE NOT NUDE; THEY'RE WEARING RUNNING SHOES
Naked runners take part in the annual Patxi Ros nude 5,000-meter race at La Salvaje beach, near Sopelana, Sept. 15. The race was started in 1999 when naturist and sportsman Patxi Ros decided to combine his two favorite pastimes in a public event. REUTERS

California wildfire grows to 7,300 ha

FAWNSKIN, CALIFORNIA—AN out-of-control wildfire in the San Bernardino National Forest tore through 7,300 hectares of brush and timber, forcing the evacuation of about 5,000 people from a pair of California mountain communities.

Mandatory evacuations were ordered for the resort community of Green Valley Lake and the Fawnskin area near Big Bear Dam, about 136 kilometers east of Los Angeles, said Jim Wilkins of the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

"It's just been running and gunning all day long, eating up ground," Wilkins said Saturday. "It's a very aggressive fire burning through fuels that haven't been burned in 50 to 75 years."

Winds of about 32 kph and humidity of just 10 percent were helping the blaze grow. The fire burned several outbuildings at a campground, and had crept within a half kilometer of homes in Fawnskin. Firefighters were able to block its southern progress toward populated areas, but it was burning freely in the north and west.

Evacuation centers were set up at two high schools.

Voluntary evacuations were called for Lucerne Valley south of the Pitzer Buttes area. Fire officials also evacuated several campgrounds, and some roadways in the area were closed to traffic.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for San Bernardino County, clearing the way for state government assistance with firefighting costs.

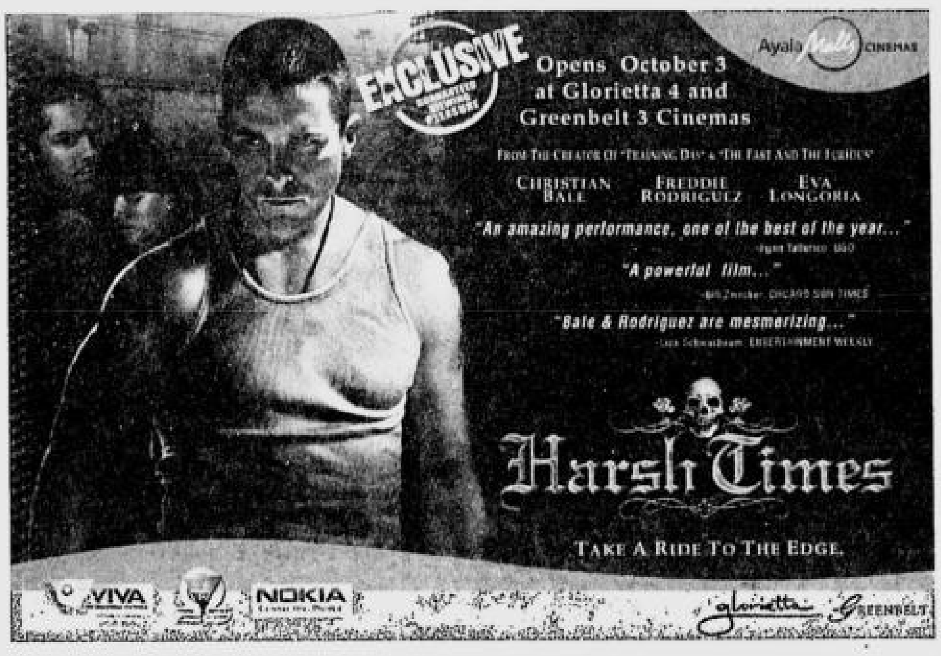
About 630 firefighters were aided by water drops from helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft as they battled the blaze, which was burning in steep terrain.

The fire, which was reported Friday, was 5 percent contained Saturday afternoon. Its cause was under investigation.

Meanwhile in San Diego County, about 400 people were ordered out of homes in Whispering Pines, a subdivision of the historic town of Julian, were evacuated after a 200-hectare wildfire started northeast of town Saturday afternoon, county sheriff's officials said.

The fire destroyed an empty vacation home.

The top of a burning tree fell on two firefighters, who were hospitalized with moderate injuries, said Matt Streck of the California Department of Forestry. *AP*



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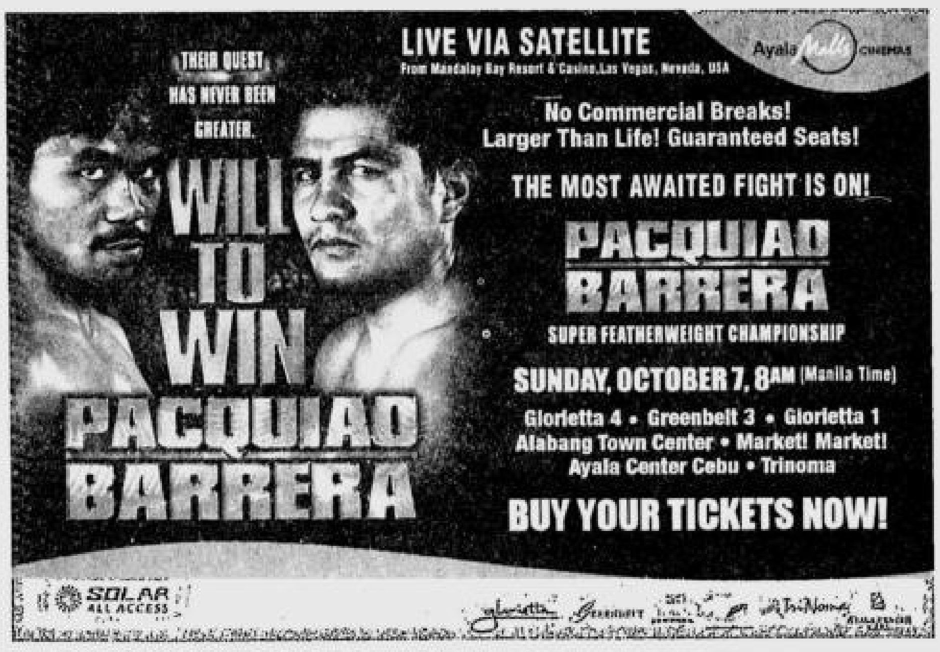

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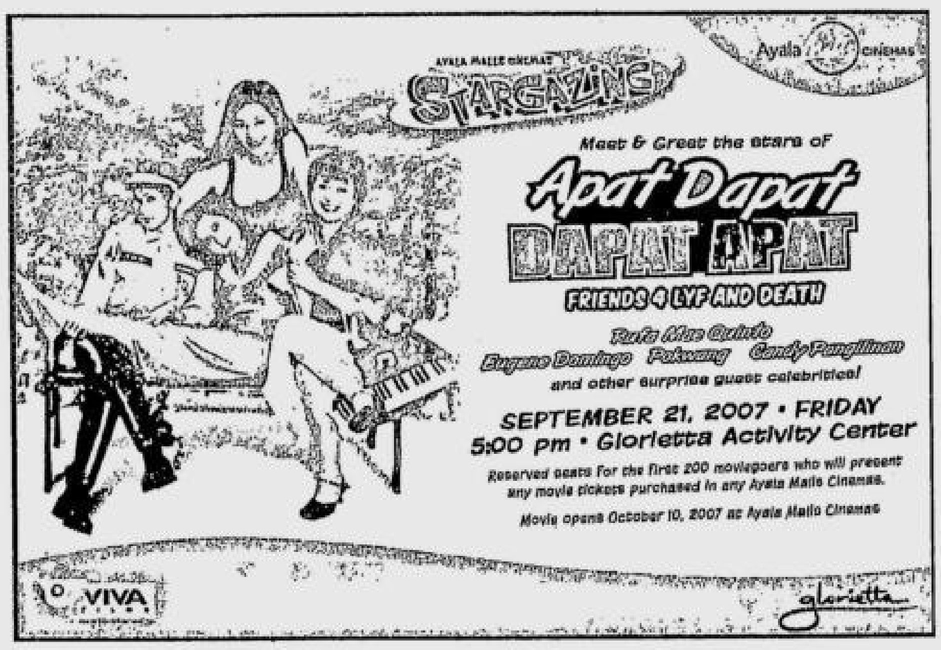

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Episcopal Church faces deadline on gay issues

AS THE BISHOPS OF THE EPISCOPAL Church approach their semiannual meeting this week in New Orleans, the predictions of a rupture over homosexuality within the church in America or with the rest of the global Anglican Communion are again being taken seriously.

At the top of the agenda for the Sept. 20-25 gathering will be a directive issued by the leaders of the Anglican Communion to stop consecrating openly gay and lesbian bishops and to ban blessings of same-sex unions or risk a diminished status in the communion, the world's third-largest Christian denomination.

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, who is the spiritual leader of the communion, will attend the meeting. It will be the first time Williams has met with the church's House of Bishops since the 2003 consecration of the gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire.

The communion's directive asks for a response from the Episcopal Church by Sept. 30.

In interviews last week, bishops and church experts who hold a range of views on homosexuality said they expected the House of Bishops would stop short, perhaps far short, of meeting the directive's demands. That could widen rifts, as several dioceses have said they would break away from the Episcopal Church and primates of several provinces, or regions, have spoken of leaving the global communion.

"I think the meeting will add some clarity to what has already taken place," said Bishop Kirk S. Smith of Arizona. "I think clearly there is going to be some sort of exodus from the communion."

Currently, the Episcopal Church urges, but does not require, dioceses and bishops to refrain from electing openly gay and lesbian bishops. None have been elected since Robinson, but the Rev. Tracey Lind, who is a lesbian, is among the candidates to become the new bishop of Chicago.

The church does not have rites of blessing for same-sex unions, but some individual bishops permit blessing ceremonies in their dioceses.

Several dissident dioceses, like Quincy, Ill., San Joaquin, Calif., and Pittsburgh, are taking steps to align themselves with a more conservative Anglican province abroad, should the Episcopal bishops refuse the terms of the directive, said Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, who leads a network of conservatives seeking alternative oversight. Such departures would probably lead to years of litigation over church property, experts said. *NYT*

Disillusioned Greeks vote in cliffhanger poll

ATHENS—GREEKS VOTE ON Sunday in an election seen as crucial for economic reforms needed in the euro zone's second-poorest member and big-party fatigue could propel smaller parties into the role of powerbrokers.

Conservative Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis called the early vote confident his economic record would secure an easy win, but a slow response to summer forest fires that killed 65 people and a series of scandals have hurt his chances.

The election pits Karamanlis against socialist leader Andreas Papandreou, both heirs to prominent political dynasties, but opinion polls suggest neither may win an outright majority with voters defecting to smaller parties.

The far-right LA.O.S. party is expected to enter parliament for the first time and could end up as one of the powerbrokers.

Papandreou's socialists have appeared unable to capitalize on the government's woes and trail the conservatives in opinion polls, although the gap between them has narrowed.

Opinion polls published before a Sept. 1 blackout showed the conservative New Democracy party leading the socialist Pasok by 1 to 2 percentage points and neither had enough votes to form a government. More than 10 percent were undecided.

"Elections used to interest me, I was an active supporter. I have my own problems now. I don't care who will win," Dimitra Zapati told Reuters Television at her home in Ancient Pissa, extensively damaged by the forest fires.

Karamanlis, nephew of the late statesman Constantine, scored a landslide victory in 2004 against Papandreou, son of the late Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou. *Reuters*

SMOGGY HONG KONG
A Chinese-style roofed tourist ferry is seen as it departs from a pier into the smog on Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong, Sept. 16. Hong Kong is currently experiencing high levels of pollution, which can lead to long term health problems for residents. AFP

FOR THE CAUSE OF PURITY

Ballet dancers, including Rebecca Moon (front left) of the Regal Daughters Ballet Company, carry a cross into the ballroom at the annual Father-Daughter Purity Ball in Colorado Springs, Colorado Sept. 14. Fathers recite a covenant committing themselves to the protection of their daughter's purity at the ball.

REUTERS

CARTOON ROW REVISITED

Qaida puts bounties on heads of Swedes

DUBAI—AN AL-QAIDA FRONT organization in Iraq has offered rewards to anyone who kills two Swedes behind a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a dog, in a statement posted on the Internet.

The self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq placed a bounty of at least $100,000 on the head of the cartoonist Lars Vilks and $50,000 on Ulf Johansson, editor in chief of the Nerikes Allehanda newspaper which published the caricature.

"We call for the liquidation of the cartoonist Lars who offended our prophet," said the statement issued in the name of the group's leader, Sheikh Abu Omar al-Baghdadi.

"We announce a reward of $100,000 to anyone who kills this infidel criminal. This reward will be raised to $150,000 if his throat is slit," said the statement whose authenticity could not be verified.

The statement also threatened attacks on Swedish firms unless unspecified "crusaders" issued an apology.

"We know how to force you to apologize. If you do not, expect us to strike the businesses of your major firms like Ericsson, Scania, Volvo, Ikea and Electrolux," it said.

The Swedish TT news agency said Saturday that Vilks was temporarily abroad, and quoted him as feeling safe but on guard.

"I think there's no reason to worry for the moment because I am moving around but when I am back home, in one spot, it will be very easy to track me down," he said.

"This last threat means of course I have more discussions with the police to determine how to act and what we are going to do," Johansson, who has refused to apologize for the cartoon, told AFP.

He said he had received police protection and Swedish authorities were analyzing the tape to determine who Sheikh Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was and if he really existed.

Muslim Council of Sweden chief Helena Benouda denounced the threats, saying that Muslim organizations in Sweden were capable of handling the cartoon issue themselves.

"We don't think like this at all. It is criminal to call to kill somebody," said Benouda. "It is really unnecessary and it's ugly, especially in the moment of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

The Swedish ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Jan Thesleff, offered an apology to the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Sept. 11 for the controversy created by the cartoon's publication.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt also held talks with envoys from 22 Muslim nations on Sept. 7 in a bid to defuse the row.

The publication of the sketch in Nerikes Allehanda on Aug. 18—featuring the prophet's head on a dog's body—sparked a fiery debate in the Swedish media on freedom of expression and prompted protests by Muslims in the western town of Oerebro, where the newspaper is based.

A strict interpretation of Islam forbids the depiction of Muhammad in any form.

The cartoonist has received previous death threats, while the Swedish foreign ministry has also advised its nationals to exercise caution in the Middle East.

A series of 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in Denmark's biggest daily more than a year ago led to riots in several Muslim countries. *AFP*

Internal wrangling delays Bush decision on Iran strategy

WASHINGTON—WHILE SCRUTINY last week focused on the debate over troop strength, President Bush also used the occasion to turn up the pressure on Iran, using his speech on Thursday to stress the need to contain Iran as a major reason for the continued US presence in Iraq.

The language in Bush's speech reflected a struggle between factions within his administration over how aggressively to confront Iran. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has been arguing for a continuation of a diplomatic approach, while officials in Vice President Dick Cheney's office advocate a much tougher view that seeks to isolate and contain Iran, and to include greater consideration of a military strike.

Bush's language indicated that the debate, at least for now, might have tilted toward Cheney. By portraying the battle with Iran as one for supremacy in the Middle East, Bush turned up the rhetoric another, more bellicose, notch. "If we were to be driven out of Iraq, extremists of all strains would be emboldened," Bush said. "Iran would benefit from the chaos and would be encouraged in its efforts to gain nuclear weapons and dominate the region."

The state department, which has pushed for a more restrained tone in America's dealings with the world in general, and Iran in particular. Cheney and hard-line hawks in his office, however, have become increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of progress in curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, where Rice has advocated a diplomatic approach.

Allies of Cheney continue to say publicly that the United States should include regime change in Iran as a viable policy option, and have argued, privately, that the United States encourage Israel to consider a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The debate between the factions will play out soon in a decision over whether to declare Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, or a unit of it, a terrorist organization and subject to increased financial sanctions.

While some White House officials and some members of the vice president's staff have been pushing to blacklist the entire Revolutionary Guard, administration officials said, officials at the state and treasury departments are pushing for a narrower approach that would list only the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force, or perhaps, only companies and organizations with financial ties to that group. The designation would make it easier for the United States to block financial accounts and other assets controlled by the group. *NYT*

Japan PM favorite vows better China ties, no Yasukuni visits

FUKUDA

AP

TOKYO—YASUO FUKUDA, the front-runner to be Japan's next prime minister, pledged Sunday to strengthen ties with China and said he would not visit a war shrine seen as a symbol of Tokyo's wartime past.

In a televised, head-to-head debate with his only challenger, Fukuda also suggested taking a softer stance on North Korea and spoke of ramming through legislation to extend support for US-led operations in Afghanistan.

Fukuda, a 71-year-old elder of the ruling Liberal Democrat Party (LDP), is favorite to beat former Foreign Minister Taro Aso and succeed outgoing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who announced last week that he was stepping down.

Although the contest is officially for the LDP leadership, its majority in the lower house of parliament means whoever wins the party's Sept. 23 vote will become premier of the world's second biggest economy.

"China is now aiming at a free market economy. They are making an effort," Fukuda said in the debate.

"We need to cooperate with them," he added, cementing his reputation as a foreign policy dove, particularly on Asia.

Fukuda said he had no plans to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial which is controversial because the 2.5 million Japanese war dead it honors include World War II war criminals.

"As a prime minister, I think I will have to refrain from making a visit," he said.

Former Premier Junichiro Koizumi, whom Abe succeeded last year, infuriated China and other Asian neighbors who had suffered under Japanese occupation, notably the two Koreas, by repeatedly visiting the shrine.

Aso, for his part, criticized China for "insufficient explanation" of its growing military spending, which he called a threat to Japan and the region.

"Their transparency (on military spending) is not good enough," he warned, and "makes its neighbors sense the possibility" of military action. "In that sense, it's a threat."

Meanwhile Fukuda indicated Tokyo may tone down its current hardline policy on North Korea over its nuclear ambitions and an unresolved dispute over its past abduction of Japanese nationals.

He pointed out that the United States was reversing its tough stance amid early talks between the two countries on plans to remove the communist state from a US blacklist of states that sponsor terrorism.

"It is natural to adjust ourselves to a change in international situations," Fukuda said. "We have to make conversation to some extent. It is possible to change our method."

Japan has taken the hardest line at six-nation talks aimed at dismantling the North's nuclear programmes, and has imposed economic sanctions, saying it will not help Pyongyang until the kidnapping dispute is resolved.

Separately, Fukuda said the ruling coalition may force through legislation to continue logistical support—mainly refueling assistance—for US-led operations in Afghanistan, despite strong opposition resistance.

"They are symbolic activities. We really want to continue them," he said.

He spoke of a "last resort" option of passing the legislation through the lower house twice—an unorthodox method allowing the ruling camp to ignore the opposition-dominated upper house.

Aso was initially seen as the front-runner to succeed Abe, but leaders of the party's key factions voiced support for Fukuda at the end of last week on expectations he can revamp the scandal-hit party.

Aso criticized party bosses for those tactics in a speech to LDP lawmakers Sunday.

"A hastily-formed agreement should be broken. Hastily-formed groupings will fall apart soon," he said. "We have learnt from history that when we select a leader, we have to listen to people's voice."

Meanwhile Abe, who was hospitalized Thursday suffering from exhaustion and an intestinal disorder, was still under treatment, a hospital official said, adding it was unclear when he could be discharged. *AFP*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Philippine National Committee on Large Dams

The Philippine National Committee on Large Dams (PNCOLD) in association with the Philippine Waterworks Association Inc. (PWWA) hereby announces the 2007 Technical Convention/Workshop to be held on November 27 and 28, 2007 at NPC Fiesta Hall, NPC Building I, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

This event aims to disseminate information on dam operation and safety management and to bring together updates/recent development in engineering practices and studies on the technological, environmental, economical and social aspects of dam management. The technical convention/workshop will also include a visit to Angat Dam.

This year's convention theme is **"Role of the State, Private Companies and the Public in Philippine Dam Safety Management"**.

SCHEDULE:

September 28, 2007	Deadline for Submission of Technical Papers
November 20, 2007	Deadline for Registration of Participants
November 27 & 28, 2007	Technical Convention Proper

ORGANIZED BY:

The Philippine National Committee on Large Dams (PNCOLD) represents the Philippines to the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD).

PNCOLD OFFICERS 2006-2008:

President	*Cyril C. Del Callar, NPC*
1st Vice President	*Lorenzo H. Jamora, MWSS*
2nd Vice President	*Marcelino V. Tugaoen, Jr., NIA*
Secretary	*Ryukichi Kawaguchi, SRPC*
Treasurer	*Raymond E. Cunningham, CE CWECI*
Adviser	*Jose U. Jovellanos, EDCOP*

APPLICATION:

Interested participants can apply or inquire to:
Mr. Romualdo Ma. T. Beltran / Mr. Manuel I. Monteverde
PNCOLD Secretariat
National Power Corporation
Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, 1100 Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. (632) 9213541 local 5556, Telefax (632) 9245236
rtbeltran@napocor.gov.ph or mimonteverde@napocor.gov.ph

REGISTRATION FEE:

The registration fee which covers registration fee covers convention kit, program proceeding, snacks, lunches, technical tour and attendance to technical sessions are as follows:

Php 500.00	Student
Php 750.00	Members
Php 1,000.00	Non-members

PAPER SUBMISSION:

Please submit technical papers through email to:
Ms. Jerese I. A. Lagapa, Chairperson, Program Committee
jialagapa@yahoo.com

LANGUAGE

The language of the technical convention will be in English. No translation to other languages is available.

TECHNICAL VISIT

Technical visit is at the Angat Dam, Norzagaray, Bulacan

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush faces new political battle over Iraq pullout

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Sunday faced a new clash with congressional Democrats over the unpopular war in Iraq as Senate Democrats reportedly reached a deal that would allow soldiers to spend more time at home.

"If we were to be driven out of Iraq, extremists of all strains would be emboldened," Bush said Saturday in his weekly radio address. "Al-Qaida could find new recruits and new sanctuaries," he added, naming the extremist network that he blames, along with Iran, for fueling violence in Iraq.

"By contrast, a free Iraq will deny al-Qaida a safe haven. It will counter the destructive ambitions of Iran. And it will serve as a partner in the fight against terrorism," he said.

Meanwhile in Washington, thousands of protestors marched from the White House to Congress Saturday, waving placards demanding an end to the war in Iraq, the return of US troops, and the impeachment of Bush.

Organizers said 197 people, including dozens of veterans and activists, were arrested as they crossed police lines. Police put the number of arrests at 189.

Authorities also used pepper spray to disperse the crowd, according to the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (Answer) coalition, the group that organized the march.

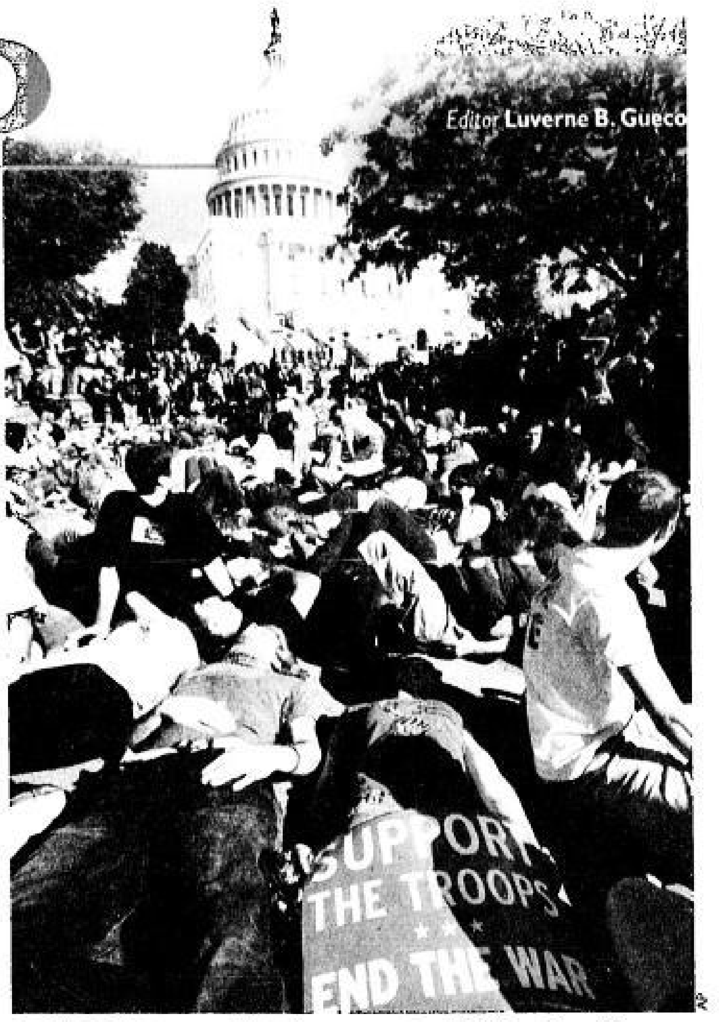
The president announced in a speech on Thursday that the size of the US force in Iraq would decrease by about 21,500 combat troops by mid-2008, with the first 5,700 soldiers leaving Iraq in December. Most of those soldiers had been scheduled to rotate back to the United States at that time.

Currently 169,000 US troops are in Iraq, up from 130,000 before Bush announced a "surge" of US forces in January.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, keenly aware that the all-volunteer US military has been stretched thin with repeated deployments, said Friday he hoped US forces in Iraq can be brought down to about 100,000 by the time the next president takes office in January 2009.

The figure could decrease faster if Senate Democrats have their way: A proposal by Democratic Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia—a Vietnam war veteran—is under discussion that would require US troops to spend as much time at home as on their most recent tours overseas before being redeployed.

The proposal is close to winning enough Republican support for approval, The New York Times reported Saturday. *AFP*



PROTESTORS stage a "die in" protest on Capitol Hill on Sept. 15 in Washington. At least 150 protesters were arrested as thousands of demonstrators marched to the Capitol demanding an end to the Iraq war.

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Sadr's movement pulls out of Iraq Shiite alliance

BAGHDAD—THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT loyal to anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr quit Iraq's ruling Shiite Alliance on Saturday, leaving Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's coalition in a precarious position in parliament.

AL-SADR REUTERS

The move further weakens the ruling coalition, which even before the defection had failed to push through laws aimed at reconciling Iraq's warring majority Shiite and minority Sunni Arabs.

Maliki's government now enjoys the support of only about half of Iraq's 275 lawmakers, although it could survive with the support of a handful of independent lawmakers.

"The political committee has declared the withdrawal of the Sadr bloc from the (Shiite) alliance because there was no visible indication that the demands of Sadr's bloc were being met," the Sadr movement said in a statement released at a news conference in the holy Shiite city of Najaf.

An adviser to Maliki said the government had no immediate comment.

The decision by Sadr's movement to quit the Shiite Alliance in parliament was not unexpected after the cleric pulled his six ministers from the cabinet in April.

Maliki can still count on the backing of two other Shiite Islamist parties and the two main Kurdish parties in parliament, and so far no party has launched any push for a no-confidence vote in his government.

Sadr was instrumental in getting Maliki, a fellow Shiite, appointed prime minister in May last year.

His political bloc has raised a host of grievances in the past, including Maliki's refusal to set a timetable for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.

Sadr, a fiery nationalist whose stronghold in the capital is Baghdad's sprawling Sadr City, led his Mehdi Army militia in two uprisings against US forces in 2004.

Maliki's government has been paralyzed by infighting.

Besides the withdrawal of ministers loyal to Sadr, six cabinet members from the main Sunni Arab bloc have also quit.

Speaking in parliament on Monday, Maliki acknowledged that the term "national unity government," used to describe his cabinet had lost its meaning.

Hinting at a long promised overhaul of his cabinet, he said it was time for a "partnership government," but gave no details.

The next day Sadr's movement said it was considering withdrawing from the alliance, accusing it of failing to provide security and said political progress had been inadequate.

On Saturday evening a suicide car bomber killed 10 people and wounded 15 others in southwest Baghdad. Many were queuing outside a bakery to buy bread for the evening Ramadan meal which breaks the day-long fast during the Muslim holy month.

The bombing came on the same day that an al-Qaida led group, the Islamic State in Iraq, announced a new phase of attacks to mark the month of Ramadan, which started this week. *Reuters*

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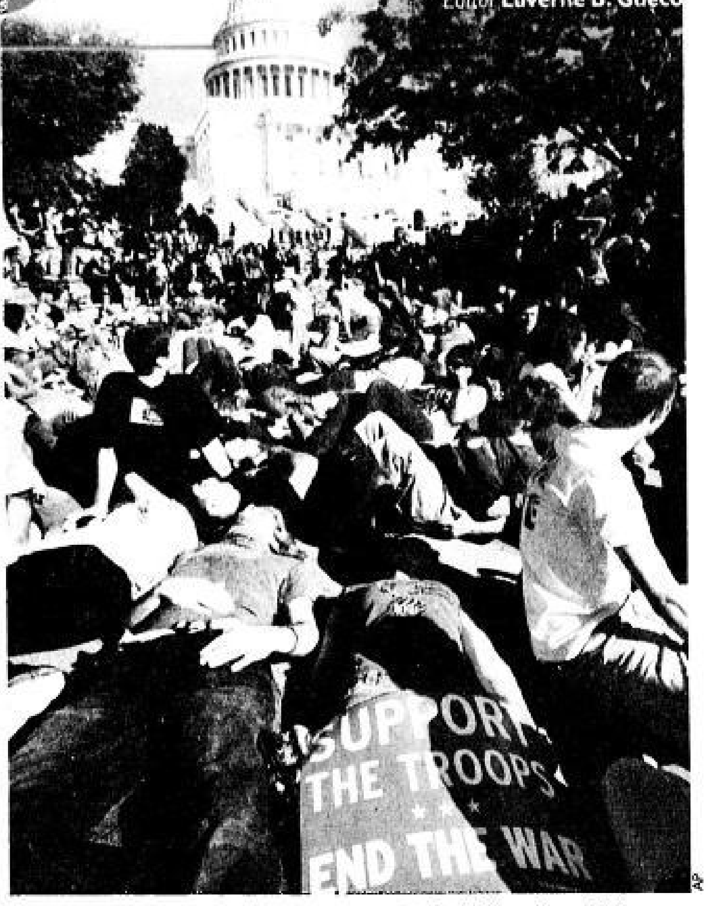

AP

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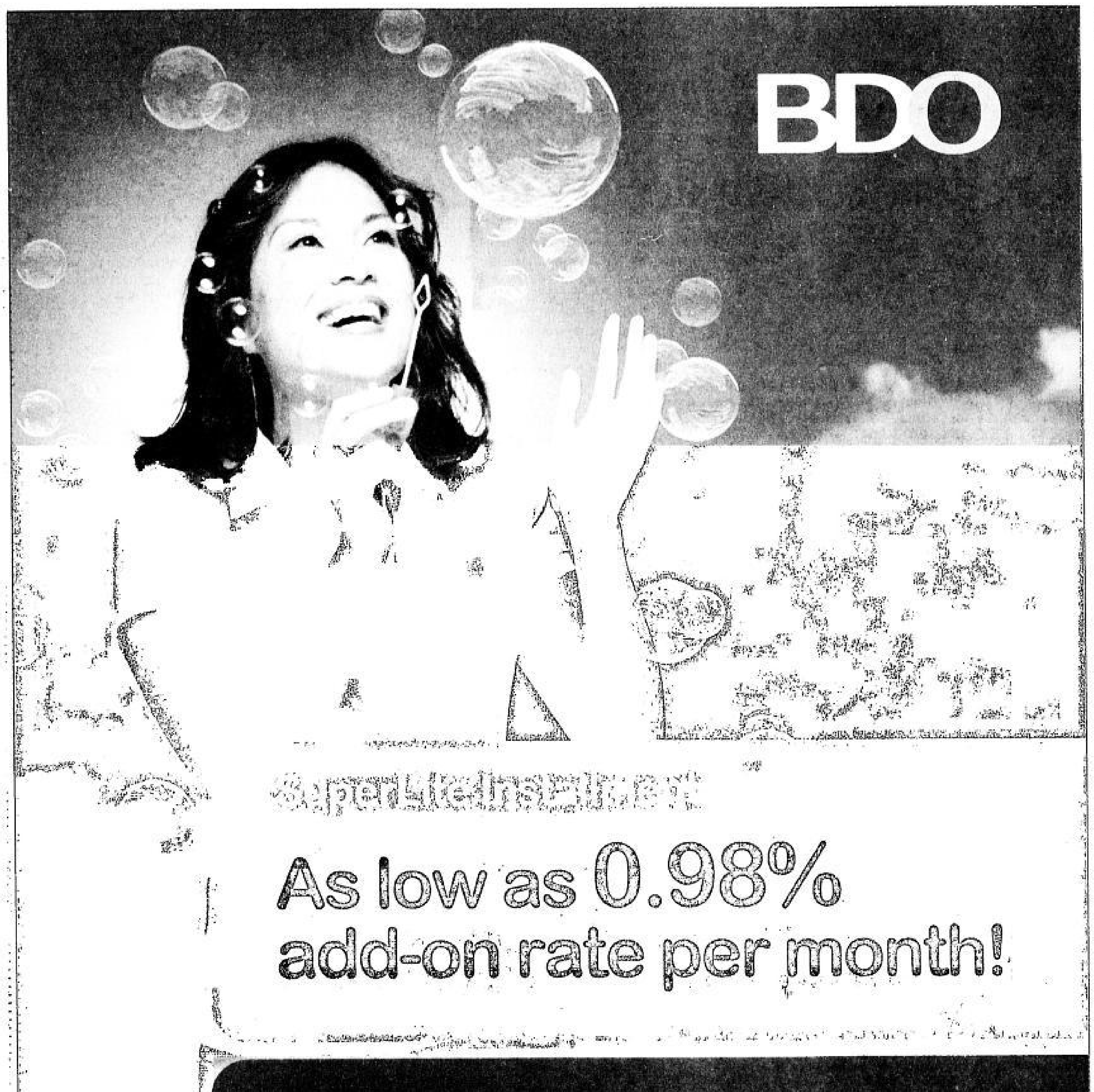
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■ Call him the $10-million man /A34

Tigers, Tams in KO duel for No. 4 today

By Musong R. Castillo

WITH ITS VARSITY BASKETBALL REIGN ON THE LINE, SANTO Tomas clashes with a Far Eastern side it has never gotten close to beating this season as a hectic playoff week in the UAAP unfurls today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Game time in the duel for the No. 4 spot is at 3 p.m. with the Growling Tigers still smarting from an 84-73 beating they got from the Tamaraws on Thursday, where they threw away a golden opportunity to make the Final Four outright.

Today's winner will face the loser of the Ateneo-La Salle game scheduled tomorrow, also at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Blue Eagles fell to the National University Bulldogs, 96-88, in overtime Saturday to pave the way for the third meeting between the blood rivals, which was actually scheduled for Thursday but was moved two days earlier with the availability of the Big Dome.

The winner between the Archers and the Eagles will earn the No. 2 ranking and the twice-to-beat privilege against the winner of the playoff between Nos. 3 and 4.

The defending champions have shown their discomfort against the Tamaraws, a team that basically resembles Santo Tomas in terms of composition, height and the way it plays.

"I don't think that it is right to say that we have their number," Far Eastern coach Glenn Capacio said after that Thursday win. "My players want to prove to everyone that they belong here."

That was basically what the Tigers did last year when, from out of nowhere, they made the semifinals, defeated top-ranked University of the East twice, and then the fancied Ateneo Blue Eagles, 2-1, in the title series.

"It was a wasted opportunity, definitely," UST coach Pido Jarencio said Thursday. "We just have to come out a better team now."

Santo Tomas also lost to Far Eastern in the first round, 81-66.

Meanwhile, La Salle's Brian Ilad will be asked to issue a public apology to Warriors forward Mark Pamfulme and the league on top of a two-game suspension.

Ilad punched Pamfulme at the back of the head on Thursday in La Salle's side of the bench in a game which the Red Warriors won to sweep the eliminations.

The league's technical committee upheld commissioner Ed Cordero's recommendation of the apology—an unprecedented punishment—but wants a longer ban on the La Salle cager.

GAME TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
3 p.m.—Far Eastern vs Santo Tomas

FAR EASTERN U's Aldrech Ramos wins out the rebound battle against UST's Jun Dizon. RODEL ROTONI

Finally, a big Pucay payday

GUANGZHOU—WHAT he earned in eight tournaments this season Mars Pucay all but doubled yesterday as the 12-year Asian Tour veteran finished tied for fifth place in the inaugural Midea China Classic won by Thai star Thaworn Wiratchant after a nerve-jangling three-way play-off Sunday.

Pucay closed with a 2-under-par 69 and wound up with a 16-under 268 total that was worth $14,980, a lot more than the $7,965 he amassed from picking up the crumbs in eight tournaments earlier.

Pucay, ranked a lowly 121 in the UBS Order of Merit, had earlier rounds of 66-67-66. He started the final day in solo fourth before Korean Hur In-hoi tied him with a 67.

Jerome Delariarte won $5,760 after winding up tied for 14th at 273 with a final round of 71. Juvic Pagunsan also carded a 69 for a 281 total worth $2,000.

Meanwhile, Frankie Miñoza capped a sputtering weekend with a 75 after earlier rounds of 69-69-74 and found himself among the tailenders at 287 in the Ana Open in Hokkaido, Japan.

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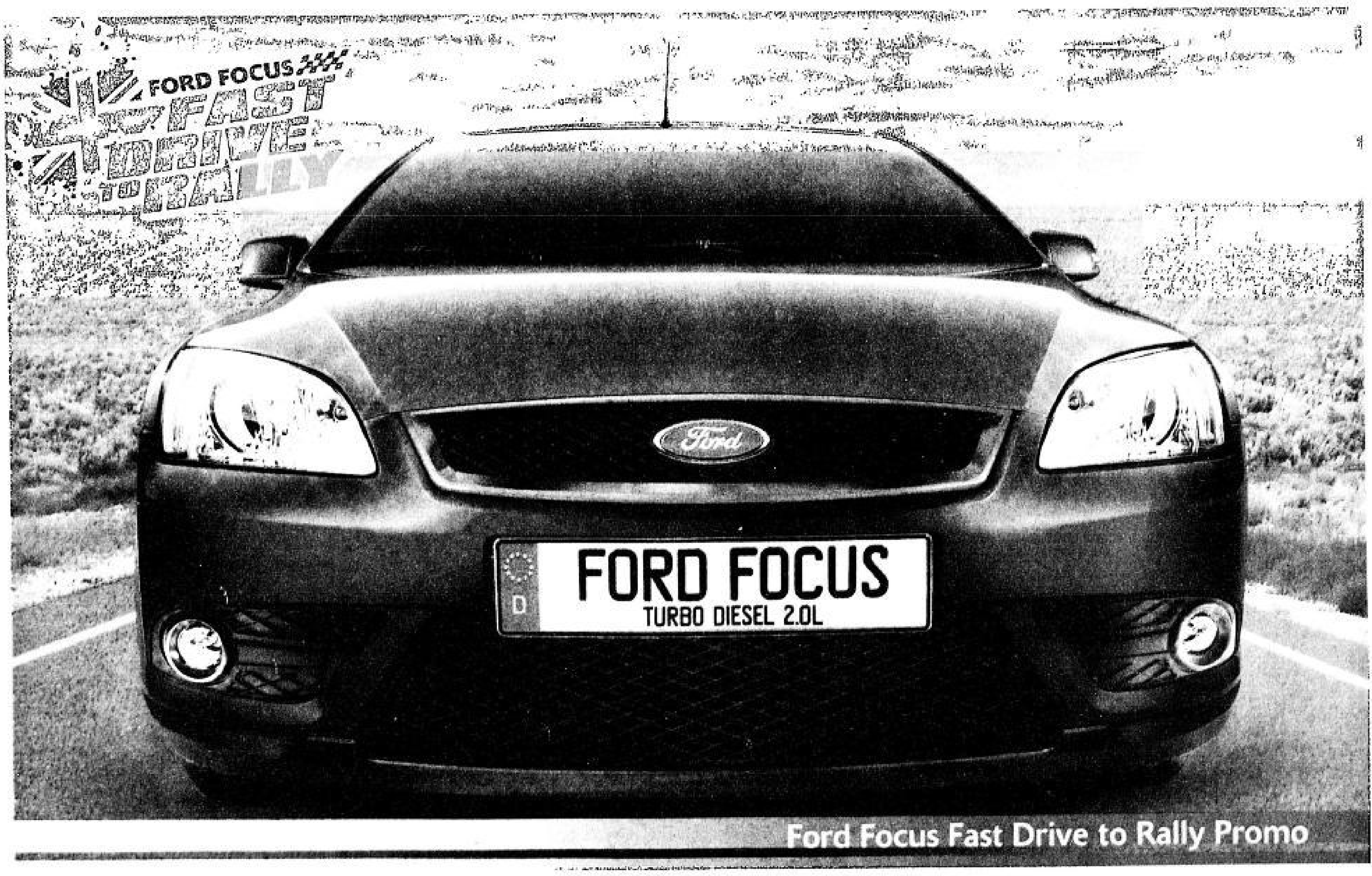

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F'nando nails RP Am

Tanpinco overwhelms Baraquiel for ladies plum

By Musong R. Castillo

ILOILO CITY—ANTHONY FERNANDO built a 6-hole buffer in the morning and then cruised to an 8-and-7 victory over an overmatched Mario Labajo to win the 2007 Philippine Amateur championship in one of the most one-sided title duels ever.

FERNANDO: Amateur golf king
PHOTO BY ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

The 24-year-old from Zamboanga broke out of a tight match with the ex-caddy from Davao with a birdie on the ninth hole of the 36-hole finale before coming back in the afternoon with the same hot form at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club here.

It was the first victory in the event for Fernando, one of six members of the National pool who putted with so much confidence, especially after intermittent rains softened the greens.

"I guess I just got lucky," said Fernando, a scholar of the Ateneo golf foundation.

The afternoon round was actually just a formality as Fernando lost none of the fire he displayed in the morning to join the likes of such great names as Frankie Miñoza and Celestino Tugot, among others, in the champion's roster.

Anya Tanpinco, a veteran internationalist from nearby Bacolod City, scored a similarly easy 10 and 8 victory over youthful Sunshine Baraquiel in the ladies' final.

Labajo, who took out two RP team members in Jay Bayron and Mark Fernando on the way to reaching the finals, suddenly lapsed into errors after engaging Anthony Fernando in a virtual dead heat after seven holes.

The 36-year-old former bag-toter at the nine-hole Matina course actually won the first hole after a double bogey 6 by Fernando, who last trailed after a Labajo birdie on No. 6.

Fernando then knocked in a four-footer for birdie on No. 17 before parring the last hole of the morning round to pad his cushion to six holes.

"I took advantage of his mistakes," said Fernando, who didn't give Labajo the opening in the afternoon by birdieing his first hole from off the green.

Tanpinco, meanwhile, didn't show the ill effects of a slightly injured wrist in pulling off the lopsided triumph.

She also had a 6-hole lead after the morning round before sealing the biggest win of her career with a birdie on No. 8 and a par on the ninth.

Tonlits Asistio, the losing finalist last year, and Lora Roberto finished third place in their respective divisions by nipping local bet Rene Menor and Louise Manalo, 1-up, respectively.

SMB RP OPEN

Gabica, Alcano forge title clash

By Marlon Bernardino
Contributor

ANTONIO GABICA CONQUERED pool maestro Efren "Bata" Reyes, 13-10, yesterday to arrange a showdown with reigning world 9-ball champion Ronato Alcano for the fourth annual San Miguel Beer (SMB) Philippine Open championship at the Decagon Hall of Silvercity Mall at the Ortigas Center.

Alcano, also this year's world 8-ball titlist, bundled out defending champion Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 13-12, in the other semifinal match of the P1.3 million tournament organized by Solar Sports in partnership with Puyat Sports.

The two finalists from Bugsy Promotion were disputing the P500,000 champion's purse in a race-to-15 duel at presstime. The runner-up prize is P250,000.

Reyes and Bustamante, who will defend their World Cup doubles title in the Netherlands late this month, settled for P100,000 each as losing semifinalists.

The 35-year-old Gabica, who won the Asian Games 9-ball gold medal and a silver in the 8-ball event last year in Doha, strung up three racks from 6-all and stayed on top for good in the race-to-13, alternate-break fight with Reyes.

"*Suwerte lang* (Just lucky)," said Gabica, noting he had as many errors like his rival, who stood as one of his sponsors when he married wife Jean some years back.

Gabica is slightly favored in the finals, having earlier beaten Alcano, 9-3, in the preliminaries.

After Bustamante stopped his run, 9-7, on Saturday, Gabica downed Carlo Biado, 9-6, in the losers' bracket to arrange a knockout semifinal date with Reyes.

Alcano also stayed alive in the one-loss side by beating giant killer Panfilo Damuag, 9-6, to advance against Bustamante.

After Gabica opened a 9-6 lead over Reyes, the man known as "The Magician" in the sport could only move within two racks three times, the last at 12-10 before dooming himself with a tough 9-ball shot in the 23rd rack.

Gabica's earlier victims in the 32-man field were 2006 SMB Asian 9-ball Tour leg winner Gandy Valle (9-7) and 2007 BCA Enjoypool.com 9-ball champion Dennis Orcollo (9-8).

SSC, UE fighters lead junior champs

By Romina S. Austria

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE'S Sidney Crispino and University of the East's Anthony John Samia led the winners yesterday in the junior division of the 2007 Samsung Best of the Best National Taekwondo Championships at Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

Negros Taekwondo Union, UFC Taekwondo Club of Baguio City and Manila's Central Gym also produced two winners each in the five-day tournament participated in by more than 400 jins who were all gold medalists in previous tournaments.

Crispino bested Bataan's Wendell Dacanay, 8-1, to bag the finweight gold medal while the fourth seed Samia won the middleweight championship by nipping Meycauayan's Paul Nikko Dizon, 5-4, in the day's last match.

Central Gym's Belarmino Ulidan, who was ranked 15th, nosed out eighth seed Elijah Marcelino of Far Eastern University, 6-5, for the featherweight title while teammate Christine Virtudazo overpowered Malolos City's Mary Grace de Jesus, 8-0, to take the middleweight women's title.

Featherweight Daphne Alindogan and welterweight Rubylyn Mapa produced gold medals for the NTU Tigers. Alindogan overwhelmed S&A Workshop's Nika Baluyot, 7-1, while Mapa prevailed over Mary Kris Dalen of Kagayan TKD, 5-2.

UFC's Ronnel Yadao stopped Davao EJAI's Leonardo Avenido in a sudden-death duel after an 8-all count to cop the men's flyweight gold while teammate Patricia Sembrano snatched the women's finweight crown over Mary Ann Espina of MTM General Santos, 12-10.

DPS' Jyra Marie Lizardo edged Leila Anne Nuguid of Silang TKD, 5-4, for the women's flyweight gold.

Region 1's Devi John Singson won the men's bantamweight over Jhomel Allas of S&A, 8-7, while the women's gold went to Aleksa Alferez of Montea, an 8-0 victor over Rizal High School's Rowena Ampilan.

The lightweight winners were Brave Hearts' Ron Alfredo Miko David and Karla Jane Alava of Rizal High School. David beat Jay Angelo To Ong of MTM in sudden death after both jins failed to score while Alava proved no match for May Shyne Maranga of Dragon Hearts, 8-3.

BENJAMIN **Sembrano (left) scores on a turning side kick against Charles Claro in their final match. Sembrano won gold.** ROMY HOMILLADA

Lucky Philippines should repay Freddie Roach

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—THEY'RE GETTING ready and there's the tinkle of silverware, the clinking of wine glasses travelling all the way from dear old Manila to the clogged corridor of the Wild Card gym here.

Of course, the famous boxing parlor where the reverend Freddie Roach preaches the profitable infliction of pain doesn't turn into a mini-carnival until next Saturday, first day of Fall, when the Manny Pacquiao Roadshow returns here.

But it will be a small celebration when the Filipino boxing superhero, after an experimental training stint in Cebu City, steps back into the sweatshop where all the great things started for him.

The bigger party will be at the historic Manila Hotel by the bay.

* * *

Based on the prospective guest list, ticked off by the nosy boxing chronicler Nick Giongco, a Wild Card regular being sorely missed here, it will be a strictly tuxedo affair the Philippine government will be hosting in November.

The event is the World Boxing Council (WBC) Convention.

It's actually more than just a convention.

Other than the old technical seminars, the tired philosophical lectures, the event is expected to swim in opulence as the attending biggies, led by Don Jose Sulaiman, receive the fabulous Filipino hospitality morning, noon and evening.

On the guest list are Don King, Oscar De La Hoya, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, and practically all card-bearing members of the world boxing glitterati.

* * *

The affair, by the way, is a brainchild of the happy-go-lucky chair of the Games and Amusements Board, Eric Buhain, favorite son-in-law of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Buhain had to hold a smaller but extra expensive boxing convention in 2005, a sort of dry-run with most invitees from Asia, to make sure this big one will be a success.

Anyway, Buhain did not say it, but the WBC bash is obviously his way of splurging to thank all those who mattered in the prizefight firmament for the RP victory in last month's Boxing World Cup in Sacramento.

Maybe it's also a tailspin of the joust for the historic pinning down of former President Joseph Estrada in a plunder case?

* * *

For the record, and this has got to be told, the Boxing World Cup was won by the RP team through the solid efforts of Cebu sportsman Tony Aldeguer and his ALA Stable, with no visible government support whatsoever.

Anyway, the WBC Convention should be truly momentous if Manny Pacquiao scrapes past Marco Antonio Barrera in their rematch in Las Vegas on Oct. 6.

That could assure there would be more than enough boxing excellence to showcase to the world during the convention.

But there's another thing Buhain and his backers must prepare for.

There'll be interested attendees who would check how the Philippines has achieved success, despite the absence of a centralized boxing development program.

For example, how could a country with no boxing commission to speak of, unlike neighbors Thailand, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, continue to hit the jackpot in big-time boxing?

* * *

In case you did not notice, the coziest effort by the government for boxing comes in the form of a ticker tape parade, followed by a happy audience with the President, for Filipino world crown winners.

Noting the sordid lack of support, Freddie Roach had earlier sounded a call for the RP government to set up several clinics, and possibly a national academy, where poor aspirants could enter and pick up the sound basics of the cruel sport.

Funny how that relevant call had conveniently been buried in the hysteria over the many triumphs achieved mainly through efforts of private groups and individuals.

For sure, those who would bother to dig into the secret behind the success story are bound to conclude that RP did everything with a lucky punch.

A sure, scientific shot at stardom could be assured if half the money to be squandered in the WBC party is set aside for the more noble task of setting up free boxing schools in the hub of poor communities.

The Reverend Roach would be greatly repaid and relieved that way.

Newcomers shock Ucaa champions

GAMES TODAY
(*Olivarez Complex*)
10 a.m.—Olivarez College vs ACSAT
11:30 a.m.—UCN vs EAC
1 a.m.—La Salle-Dasmarinas vs PSBA
2:30 p.m.—Las Pinas College vs St. Francis

NEWCOMER LAS Piñas College came away with a stunning 70-68 thriller over defending champion Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals in the sixth Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (Ucaa) men's basketball tournament.

The Blue Lions leaned on the heroics of one of their two Nigerian point guards to score their fifth win in nine matches.

Nigerian standout Carlos Iroung went for a layup with six ticks to go, shattering a 68-all deadlock and sending the Blue Lions to their third straight victory and a share of fourth with the PSBA Jaguars.

The Generals' third straight loss shook the standings, with the Asian College of Science and Technology Lightnings climbing to second position after they outplayed Universal College of Nursing, 88-78.

The solo-leading St. Francis of Assisi Doves (8-1) earlier downed the La Salle-Dasmariñas Patriots, 78-62, to extend their win run to six.

CHAMPS: NBC president and Spring Cooking Oil basketball team owner Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla (sixth from right) turns over to Malabon City Mayor Tito Oreta the trophy won by the Cooking Oil Masters-Malabon in the recent national inter-city tournament. With them are head coach Efren "Yong" Garcia and his players. Padilla is helping bankroll the NBC-Spring team that will leave for Taipei on Oct. 3 to compete in the Hua Lien Invitational cagefest.

Fernandez, other UAAP hotshots join SEA Games squad tryouts

WITH THE COLLEGIATE WARS ALMOST over, the Harbour Centre-sponsored Philippine team will have new faces in its pool when it resumes training today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Amateur basketball godfather and Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero said yesterday the presence of UAAP hotshots Jonathan Fernandez of National University and Patrick Cabahug of Adamson will give coach Junel Baculi enough options as to what kind of a team he will form for the 24th SEA Games slated this December in Thailand.

Although Cabahug and Fernandez are considered as two of the finest shooters in the amateur ranks today, they still to prove their worth against other aspirants, including four Fil-foreigners, to secure slots in the national team.

"The RP training pool now has two of the best shooters in the land but they have to go through the process. But judging their performance in the UAAP, I think they will have pretty good chances of making it to the team," said Romero.

While Fernandez is a spot shooter, the 6-foot-2 Cabahug is catch-and-shoot kind of a player that makes him more dangerous than the other aspirants in the team.

Cabahug, who plays for Toyota Balintawak in the PBL, is averaging more than 25 points a game for the Falcons.

CUP WINNER: Commission on Election chair Benjamin Abalos (left) and Wack Wack Golf and Country Club president Luis Tan flank David Kiao Seng Lao, winner of the recent seventh President's Cup, during the awards rites at the clubhouse of the championship venue.

Air21 not giving up on Jaworski

By Musong R. Castillo

ROBERT JAWORSKI WILL MOST PROBABLY accept the Air21 coaching job in the PBA, hopefully in time for the opening of the coming Philippine Cup.

This was the assessment of a team official, who asked not to be identified, in a talk with the INQUIRER yesterday.

"Our offer has been on his lap for close to a year now," the source said. "Knowing the (former) senator, if he would decline the offer, it would have been right there and then."

Jaworski first received the offer to coach even before last season's opening.

Team management has not received a reaction so far, but the source said he knows team owner Bert Lina is in close contact with the 61-year-old Jaworski.

The source does not know the exact details of the contract being offered to the charismatic former Toyota and Ginebra skipper. However, he added that a lot of business considerations have been thrown in by management.

"The only thing I see that could prevent (Jaworski) from taking over the team is if a greater calling comes along," said the source.

Jaworski is also reportedly being eyed for a top position in the Philippine Sports Commission and the commissionership of the PBA.

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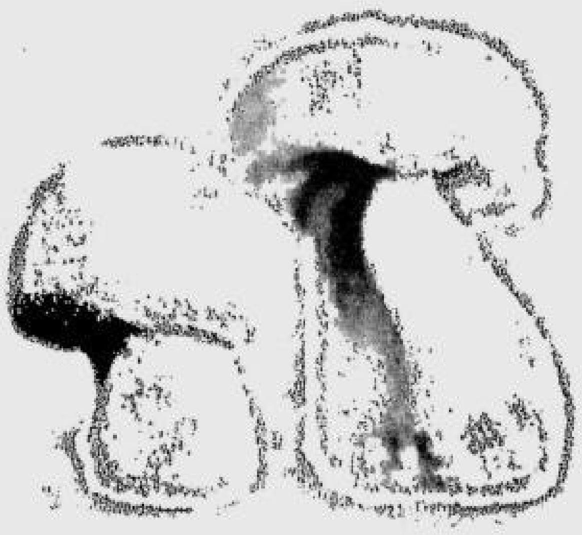

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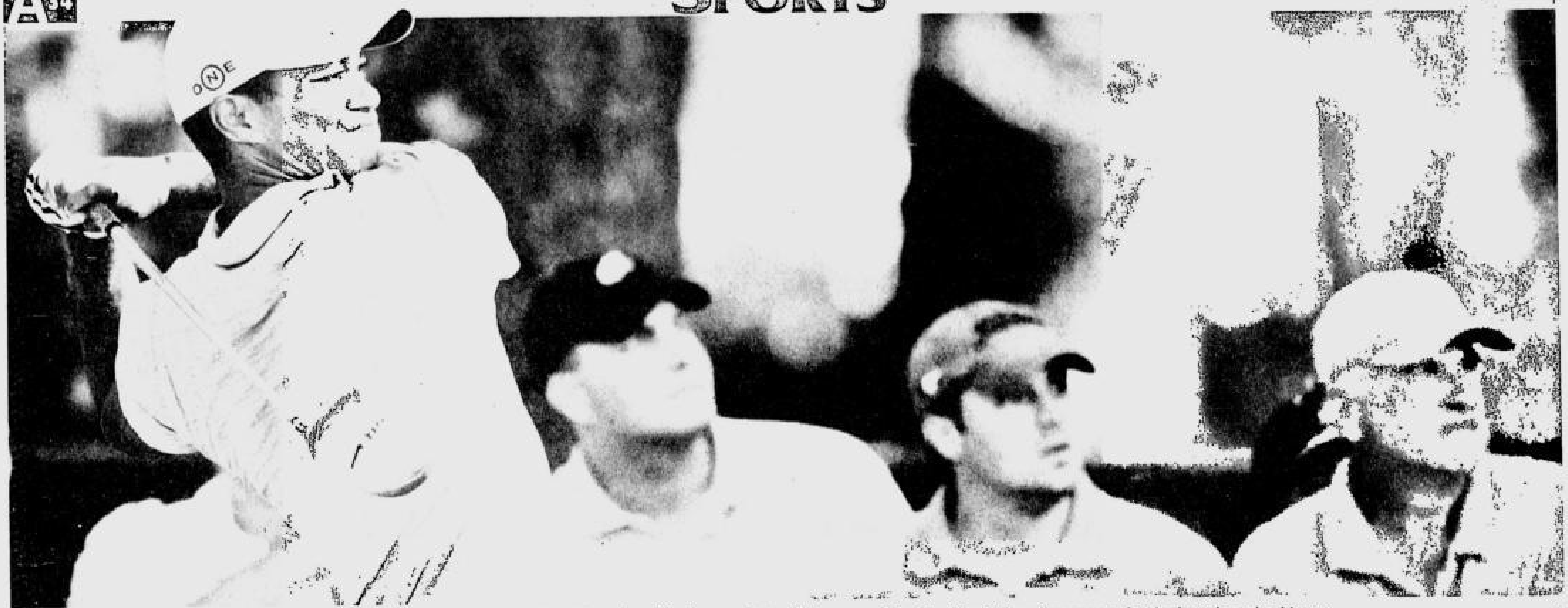


TIGER Woods always turns heads with his game. With a round left in the Tour Championship, the one that will draw people's attention is the prize money that looks to be going his way. AP

Call him the $10-million man

Tiger takes 3-shot edge to final round

ATLANTA—TIGER WOODS NEVER liked tournaments where birdies were required simply to keep up. He managed just fine Saturday at the US Tour Championship, where a 6-under 64 only allowed him to keep his three-shot margin at the pushover known as East Lake.

Even after a week of low scoring because of soft, slow greens, the third round was mystifying.

Zach Johnson flirted with a 59 until he hit into a bunker on the par-3 18th hole and had to settle for a par and a course-record 60. Mark Calcavecchia shot a 63 and only picked up one shot on the world's No. 1 player.

Woods was watching and laughing from the par-5 15th fairway as Calcavecchia made eagle to join him atop the leaderboard, but that didn't last long. Woods birdied his next two holes, and missed a 7-foot birdie on the final hole that put him at 19-under 191.

It was the lowest 54-hole start in Woods career, and it left him poised to win at East Lake for the first time. Woods has never lost a professional tournament when leading by more than one shot going into the final round.

As for the FedEx Cup?

Phil Mickelson still has a mathematical chance, but the odds are about the same as winning the lottery without buying a ticket. Lefty's only hope was winning the Tour Championship and having Woods finish lower than second by himself. Mickelson shot 70 and was 13 shots behind, so assuming he doesn't shoot 56 on Sunday, the $10 million goes into Woods' retirement account.

Tournament record

All that remains, even if Woods doesn't win his seventh tournament of the year, is how low the scores will go Sunday. The tournament record is 17-under 263, set by Bart Bryant two years ago.

"If you made a bunch of pars, you were going to get run over, so it was nice to make some birdies and get out there and still maintain the same size lead I had starting out the day," Woods said. "You see the rounds today—60, 62—and guys were taking it deep."

Calcavecchia was briefly tied after making an 18-foot eagle on No. 15, but he missed the 16th fairway and had to lay up short of the green, and he failed to birdie the last two holes.

He will play with Woods for the first time in the final pairing, although it's quite a consolation prize.

Calcavecchia, at 47 the oldest player in the 30-man field, has become so tired during this four-week stretch of the PGA Tour Playoffs that he was in last place and teed off as a single in the final round of his last two events. When he finished at Cog Hill on Sunday, he assessed his chances at East Lake this way:

"Somebody is going to finish first and somebody is going to finish 30th, and I know who the favorite is for that."

Even playing in the final group doesn't change his outlook on the first part of that equation.

"If I play like I did today, I'll have a lot of fun, even if it's not enough," Calcavecchia said. "He'll probably keep me relaxed to some degree a little bit. But it's a round of golf with Tiger Woods. It's where you want to be." *AP*

Europe makes it through rain, seizes Solheim lead

HALMSTAD, SWEDEN—EUROPE TOOK three points in the weather-delayed fourballs to edge ahead of the United States in the Solheim Cup at Halmstad, Sweden on Sunday.

Laura Davies and Becky Brewerton clinched a two-hole win over Natalie Gulbis and Nicole Castrale in the last fourball to be completed in wet conditions, giving Europe an 8.5 to 7.5 lead going into the 12 singles.

Europe needs to reach 14.5 points to regain the Cup, while the United States need 14 points to retain it.

In the first two matches, rookie Linda Wessberg and Maria Hjorth halved with Paula Creamer and Brittany Lincicome, while Iben Tinning and Trish Johnson halved with Juli Inkster and Stacy Prammanasudh.

Brewerton and Davies beat Gulbis and Castrale, while in the last match, Annika Sorenstam and Suzann Pettersen defeated Cristie Kerr and Morgan Pressel, 3 and 2.

"I think the weather maybe suits us. We are more adjustable to bad conditions," said European captain Helen Alfredsson. "But I am so proud of the way my team keeps fighting—they have such great heart." *Reuters*

SPANISH national basketball team players celebrate their victory against Greece. AP

Euro basket: Spain seals final showdown vs Russia

MADRID—SPAIN WILL PLAY RUSSIA IN Sunday's final of the European Basketball Championship.

Pau Gasol scored 23 points and Jose Calderon made some big plays down the stretch as Spain beat defending champion Greece, 82-77, on Saturday.

In the other semifinal match, Andrei Kirilenko scored 29 points and had three blocks as Russia withstood 30 points from Ramunas Siskauskas to hold off Lithuania, 86-74, and reach its record 19th final.

After the Toronto Raptors' Jorge Garbajosa hit two free throws to give Spain an 80-76 lead with 18 seconds to play, Theodoros Papaloukas jumbled the ball as he drove the lane. Juan Carlos Navarro, who also finished with 23 points, then hit two free throws at the other end. Calderon, a Raptors guard, scored 18 points.

Vassilis Spanoulis led Greece with 24 points and five assists in the game played before a capacity crowd of 15,500.

"We showed that when we have to fight in difficult moments, we know how to respond," Calderon said.

Calderon stole from Dimitrios Diamantidis with 1:47 to play and made the subsequent layup to push Spain out to a 74-68 lead moments after a two-handed dunk by Gasol.

Calderon hit two free throws to make it 76-70 moments later.

Spain reached its sixth final in the bid to become only the third nation to lift the European crown while holding the world title. It toppled Russia in the group stages 81-69. *AP*

Alonso confident of McLaren support despite spying 'proof'

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM—FORmula One world champion Fernando Alonso expects McLaren to continue backing his title push despite his role in providing key evidence against the team in a spying controversy.

"I am not concerned," the Spaniard said on Saturday after qualifying in third place and ahead of team mate and championship leader Lewis Hamilton at the Belgian Grand Prix.

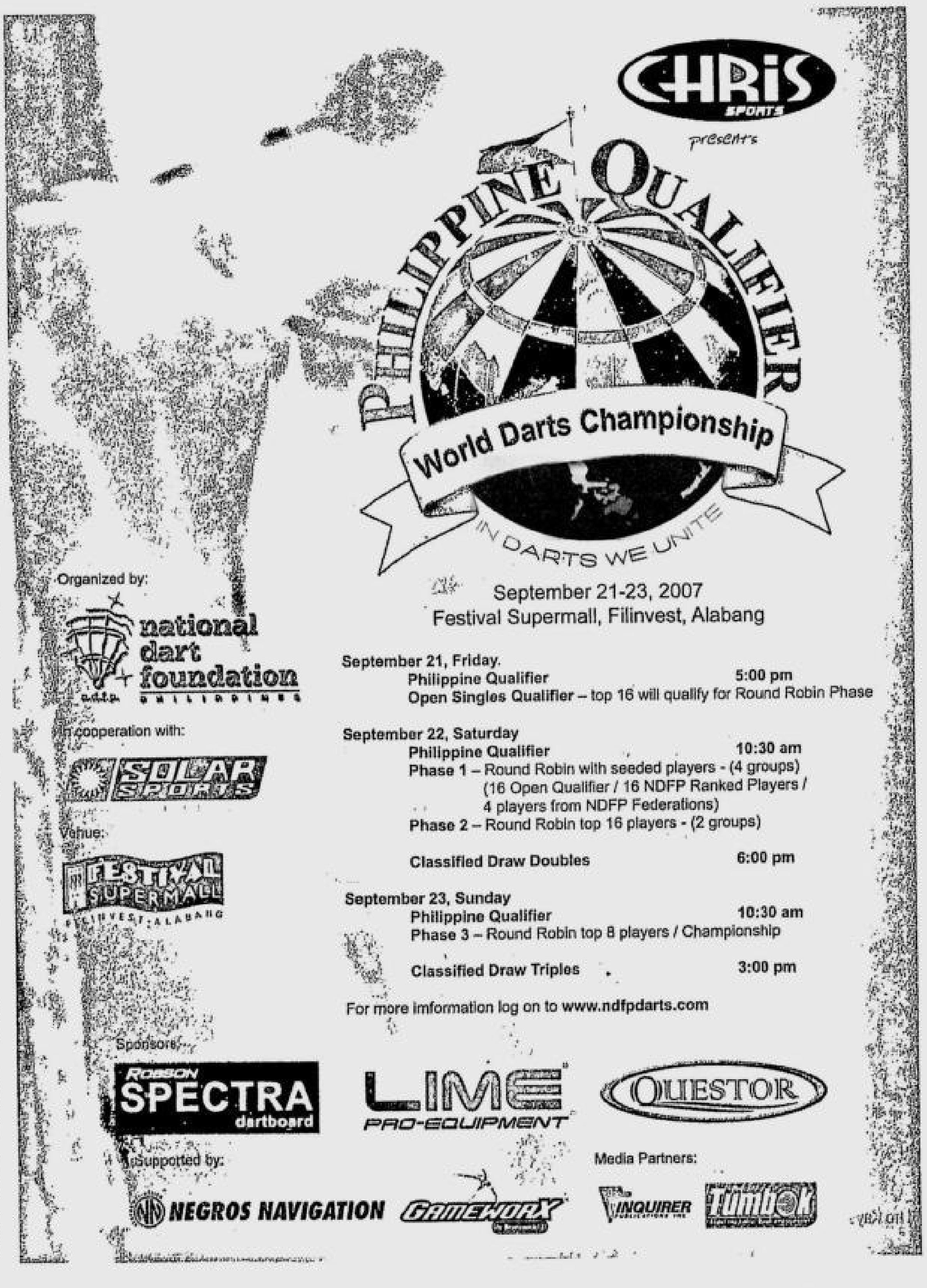
"I'm fully convinced and totally happy with how the team behaved in this situation," said Alonso, who is three points behind Hamilton with four races remaining.

McLaren were stripped of their 2007 constructors' points and fined $100 million on Thursday for having Ferrari technical information in their possession.

Alonso's comments came after International Automobile Federation (FIA) President Max Mosley praised the 26-year-old for providing key evidence to condemn McLaren.

"Without Alonso we wouldn't have known what had happened," the Gazzetta dello Sport Web site quoted him as telling reporters.

Kimi Raikkonen and Felipe Massa qualified 1-2 for Ferrari. *Reuters*



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Negros tanker creates big POF ripples

By June Navarro

ILOILO CITY—JOSE MARI Ereñeta got into swimming to cure a lung ailment.

But the nine-year-old tanker from Negros Occidental found out yesterday that he could do more than just overcome his asthma in the pool after posting remarkable performances at the close of the Philippine Olympic Festival Visayas qualifying leg.

Like teammate Joshua Balinas, 11, Ereñeta came up with five "triple A" ratings, producing his best effort in the boys' 400-meter freestyle at the rain-soaked Iloilo Sports Complex.

With a time of five minutes and 50.22 seconds, Ereñeta surpassed the standard triple A swim mark of six minutes and 49.10 seconds in the nine-year-old category.

RAFFY LERMA

NINE-YEAR-OLD Jose Mari Ereñeta churns his way to the 400m gold.

The Grade IV pupil from St. John Institute-Bacolod also accomplished triple A feats in the 200m individual medley, 100m backstroke, 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly for a five-gold medal collection.

"His (Ereñeta) last swim (400 free) was really impressive," said Mark Joseph, president of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association. "Triple A ratings in different events show that this child is versatile and could improve further as he grows older."

In his first-ever tournament since he learned to swim two years ago, with the son of an air force captain timed 3:14.29 in the 200 IM, 1:32.58 in the 100m back, 36.25 seconds in the 50m free and 45.35 in the 50m fly.

The triple A rating for nine-year-old boys in the 200 IM is 3:35.20, 100m back 1:43.40, 50m free 38.70 seconds and 45.40 in the 50m butterfly.

A triple A rating is a standard time in international swimming, which means Ereñeta is at par with the best male swimmers of his age worldwide.

Balinas, on the other hand, posted triple A ratings in the boys' 11-year-old 100m back (1:18.62), 1500m free (20:25.54), 50m free (31.76 seconds), 200m back (2:49.20) and 200m free (2:28.72).

The final-day exploits of Ereñeta and Balinas boosted Negros Occidental to third in the overall medal standings with 47 gold, 29 silver and 15 bronze medals.

Despite Negros Occidental's 45-gold assault in the pool, Iloilo province walked away with the overall title after amassing 72 golds on top of 84 silver and 70 bronze medals.

Iloilo province scooped up 17 golds in arnis on the last day of competitions.

Wrestling and muay thai also contributed heavily for the host province.

Iloilo Province gold medalists: Muay thai—Reylan Anas (bantam), Agustin Delarmino (lightweight), Jose Albert Sumido (welter), Rex de Lara (light middle), Raffy Paciban (bantam), Philip Delarmino (feather); **freestyle wrestling**—Beverly Torretejo (women's 59kg), Lorie Taparan (men's senior 66kg), Joseph Tirante (men's jr. 46-50kg), Wilmer Toledo (men's cadet 39-42kg).

Medal Tally

	G	S	B	T
Iloilo Province	72	84	70	226
Iloilo City	50	48	46	144
Negros Occ	47	29	15	91
Capiz	21	17	19	57
Antique	16	18	38	72
Negros Or	12	3	9	24
Bacolod City	6	1	0	7
Cebu	4	1	0	5
Aklan	2	5	6	13
Guimaras	1	3	3	7

SPORTS WATCH

Forum tackles boxing meets

IT'S ALL ABOUT BOXing in this week's session of the PSA Forum at the Shakey's UN Avenue branch. Officials of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines led by president Manny Lopez and sec gen Roger Fortaleza join Misamis Oriental Gov. Oscar S. Moreno in the 10:30 a.m. session to talk about the 2007 Smart National Open Youth and Women's Amateur Boxing Championship set later this month in Cagayan de Oro City. Sharing the spotlight in the forum aired live over dzSR Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Shakey's and Pagcor is broadcaster and sports columnist Ed Picson who will discuss the VisMin Cup championship slated Oct. 6, also in Cagayan de Oro.

PCAP 5-stag derby kicks off

A GUARANTEED PRIZE of at least P500,000 awaits the winners in the second leg of the the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-Stag Derby series today at the Makati Coliseum. The event is supported by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador. Efren Canlas of Pampanga (Bacolor Gold) leads the race for the coveted Stagfighter of the Year title with 4.5 points followed by Nato Lacson of Bacolod (RSL) with 4 points.

SJC stag series gets under way

LEADING GAMECOCK enthusiasts from Metro Manila clash anew today in the second of the six-leg SJC Cockers Club 5-Stag Derby at the San Juan Coliseum. Pit manager Renato Shio said Louie Cua with his entry LCC Leonard 2, Jon Maglaqui (Futuristic) and Osang dela Cruz (Goldquest Champs) topped the Sept. 8 opening leg after finishing with 4-1 cards.

PSG stagfest round 2 today

THE SECOND ROUND of the Annual PSG 5-Stag Derby begins at 6 p.m. today with some 70 fights at the Pasig Square Garden in Santolan, Pasig City. Host Edgar Coronel said nine participants tallied two wins each in Friday's opening round: Danny Cruz, Raul Panizal, Jong Morales, Arnel Paras, Gene Luna and G Killer Bees Lagayan, Boy Uy, Bobby del Rosario, Ka Pedring and Ito Kaysakat.

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CHEERIEST: Who says the UP Pep Squad has nothing to cheer about? The dismal record of its men's basketball team notwithstanding, the UP cheerdancers show off their lithe form on the way to a narrow victory over the heavily favored University of Santo Tomas Salinggawi Dance Troupe, 92.66-92.16, in yesterday's UAAP Cheering Competition. UP's victory snapped UST's five-year stranglehold on the annual event. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

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MILO LEGAZPI LEG

Veteran runners prevail

LEGAZPI CITY—A SON OF A SARI-SARI store owner from Camarines Sur and a farmer's daughter from Masbate dominated the Legazpi City leg of the 31st National Milo elimination race that started and ended in front of City Hall yesterday.

Rio de la Cruz, who was born in Bato town and now resides in Marikina City, won the men's 21-kilometer race in 1 hour, 13 minutes and 53 seconds while Joan Manangat dominated her division in 1:35:53.

The winners qualified to the grand finals on Nov. 18 in Manila along with the runners-up and third placers.

It was a big comeback for De la Cruz, who failed in his first try last year, placing ninth overall in the Nueva Ecija elimination topped by Julius Sermona, who eventually won the national finals.

Mario Maglinao, a native of Pilar, Sorsogon, and a third-year physical education student at Bicol University, came in second in 1:15:09 worth P7,000 with Gilbert Binaday checking in third in 1:16:24 for P5,000.

Manangat, a physical education student at University of the East who stopped her studies this year due to financial problem, found little resistance in beating her rivals.

It will be the second trip to the finals for Manangat, who placed runner-up to Luisa Raterta in the Naga City leg last year.

In the 5K race, Rolando Anoñuevo won in 18:07 while Airagane Managat prevailed in the distaff side in 24:10.

About 4,500 runners, 200 coming from the Philippine Natonal Police, answered the starting gun fired at 6 a.m. by Gov. Joey Sarte Salceda and assisted by Milo Events executive director Pat Goc Ong. Legazpi Mayor Noel Rosal flagged off the 5K and 3K runners.

San Pablo City in Laguna will host this Sunday the 16th stop of the 22 elimination races in this year's schedule.

MILO ALL STUDENTS NETFEST Tennis prodigy Dheo Talatayod of San Beda-Taytay returns a forehand during a his match against a Jose Rizal University player in the recent 2007 Milo All Students Tennis Championships. SBC-Taytay, also made up of eventual MVP Jeson Patrombon, Kevin Mamawal and Angelo Antonio, went on to bag the high school boys' crown with 2-1 victories over JRU and Ateneo, while Ramon Magsaysay-Manila stamped its class in the girls' division. Macy Gonzales and MVP JV Custodio powered RM-Manila to the title with wins over Poveda (3-0), San Beda-Taytay (2-0), and Assumption (2-1).

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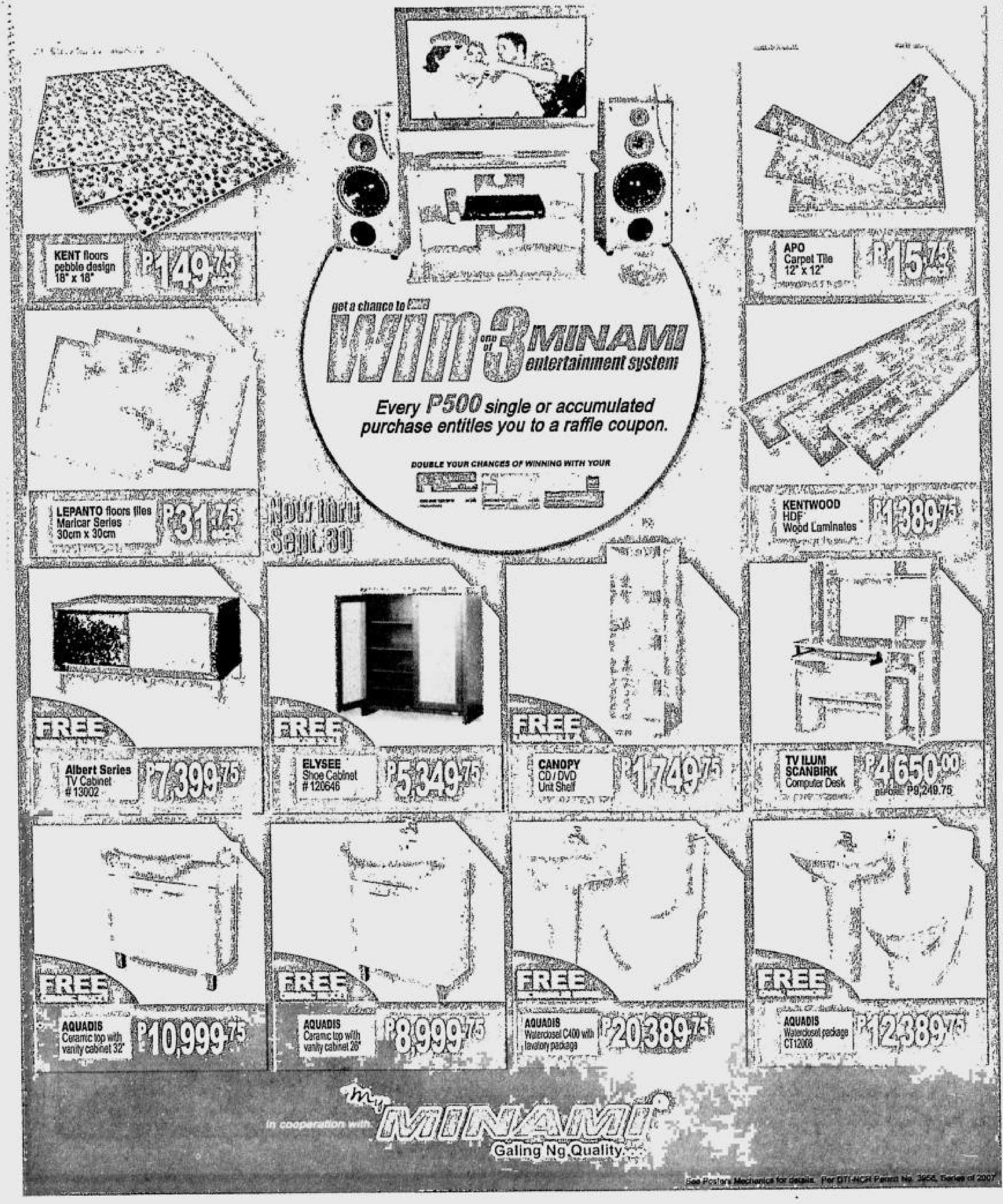

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ECONOMIC TEAM
The Arroyo administration's economic managers pose for a group photo after the Philippine Economic Briefing in Makati last week where they highlighted the country's economic stability arising from strong fiscal and economic reforms. The government's main challenge is how to contain the budget deficit within the ceiling for 2007 given the slippages in tax collectioneffort of the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs in the first semester. From left: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., Trade and Industry Secretary Peter B. Favila, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and National Economic and Development Authority OIC Director General Augusto B. Santos.

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Oil price surge worries BSP

Notes threat to inflation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has expressed concern over the potential pressures on consumer prices that can be caused by skyrocketing oil prices.

Analysts said these concerns—on top of risks from the severe dry spell earlier this year—would increase the probability that the central bank would keep its interest rates steady during its next monetary policy-setting meeting in October even as the US Federal Reserve is widely expected to cut its own rates this week.

"It is quite clear that the outlook on infla-

OIL PRICE/B6

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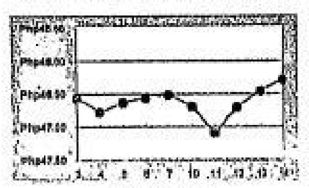

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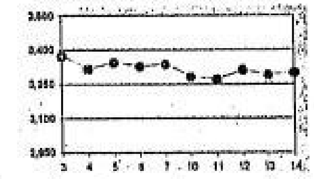

(See stock market story and report on Page B4)

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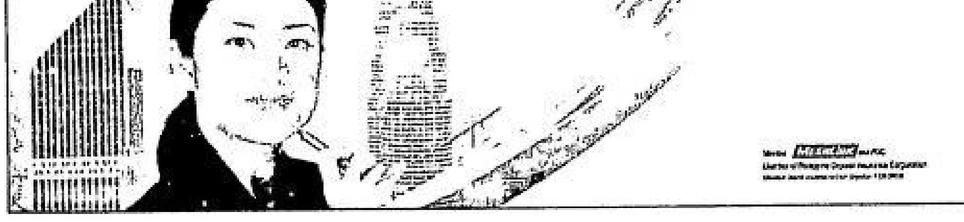

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SPV cleanup a success, but borrowers left hurting

By Daxim L. Lucas

MANUEL "MANOLING" MORATO is in a fighting mood.

The colorful public personality is part owner of a the three-star Best Western Astor Hotel in Makati City, which now faces the prospect of falling under the control of foreign owners after the hotel's creditor-bank sold its obligation to so-called "vulture funds" more than two years ago.

Morato's group secured a P400-million loan from LandBank of the Philippines during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos for a hotel project.

Difficulties with repayment made LandBank sell off this loan at a steep discount. If their new creditors are to have their way, Morato and his business associates now owe them as much as P1.5 billion, including penalties and interest.

He is now assailing the Special Purpose Vehicle Act—the 2002 law which facilitated the disposal of banks' soured loans and idle assets—officials of his company's creditor, LandBank, its shell holding company called the Philippine Opportunity for Growth and Income (Pogi) and a court-appointed receiver for TF Ventures Inc., the company that owns the hotel.

The man who once ran for President described the scheme being imposed on TF Ventures as a "forced takeover" where local shareholders "will lose controlling interest in their corporation."

Another P100B in disposals seen

"This is a corporate raid," he said in an interview, expressing his sentiment that the move on the hotel was being made by the foreign investors of Pogi "in collusion" with the receiver of his company.

"If we agree to their plan, it would result in our ownership being diluted to only 11 percent [of the company] while foreign enterprises will own 89 percent of TF Ventures," he said. "This is a violation of the Constitution."

Bad asset cleanup

His story is a familiar one in the world of borrowers and lenders.

Since the SPV Law was enacted five years ago, banks have sold off their nonperforming receivables in bulk to asset management companies that were, in turn, bought by foreign investors who specialize in bad asset recovery.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), P97 billion worth of bad assets were sold off under the first incarnation of the SPV Law, while another P32 billion has so far been moved to shell firms like LandBank's Pogi under the revised SPV Law.

"I feel we will see another P100 billion worth of asset disposals under part 2 of the SPV Law," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla said in an interview.

The prospect of more bad asset disposals is good news for the central bank.

For years, regulators have been trying unsuccessfully to coax banks into issuing more loans which, in turn, spur economic activity when the money is used for capital investments or consumption. Before the SPV Law, their success was limited.

At its peak in 2001, the local banking system was hobbled with close to P500 billion in unproductive assets and soured loans. Banks simply had no money to lend since much of their assets were tied up in illiquid foreclosed collateral.

As of the BSP's latest reckoning, however, the banking system's level of bad assets had already dropped by a third since then to only P329 billion, due mainly to SPV disposals.

"Definitely, the banking system is healthier now," Espenilla said.

But good news for regulators may be bad news for borrowers like Morato.

Espenilla, who was the central

SPV CLEAN/ B6

Competing creditors

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

"WE MAY ALL WELL BENEFIT FROM SERIous donor competition," writes an official from the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Centre, the exclusive "club" of wealthy donor countries. He was referring to the way China has been aggressively pushing loans in Africa and other parts of the developing world—and how the traditional donors are watching China's moves with concern.

Appreciation vs apprehension

Last week, we described how China's loans being extended to Africa, Latin America and Asia are being met with both appreciation and apprehension. The appreciation obviously comes primarily from the loan recipients. The apprehension mostly comes from competing donors, especially the traditional bilateral donors and multilateral funding agencies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. As we explained last week, the Chinese loans have features that make them preferred by borrowing countries, and the competing donors are understandably jealous. One has to look at the broader picture in order to obtain an objective view of the situation.

Recent allegations of massive graft and corruption surrounding the ZTE National Broadband Network project have tended to cast concessional loans from the Chinese government in a bad light lately. The problem partly arises out of the fact that the loans from China are "tied," designating specific Chinese firms as suppliers of commodities and services involved in the projects funded by the loans.

Tied aid

More traditional donors now limit tied aid to grants, but not loans. Largely due to the clamor of loan recipient countries themselves, donors have increasingly provided for international competitive bidding for their loan assistance.

In the earlier days, not a few people were uncomfortable with how foreign-funded facilities like school buildings and training centers were built entirely with materials and supplies from the donor country, all the way down to the light bulbs, screws and nails. In the case of one water filtration facility in the Visayas I had visited, I was surprised to learn that even the gravel used to filter the water was shipped in from overseas. Many of the foreign-funded buildings were seen to be over-engineered for our standards; some claimed that we could have built two or more similar buildings with the same amount of money, if built to our own minimum standards and using our own materials.

Aid and trade

It is easy enough to understand why donor countries would want to tie their aid. Foreign aid, after all, had never been entirely altruistic in its intentions. Aside from underlying political motivations, donor governments see their aid as a means for helping strengthen their own economies by opening investment and trade opportunities for their own private sector. A Neda study in the late '80s estimated that for every dollar of assistance received from foreign donors, about 65 cents actually flowed back to the donor country because of tied aid.

Still, such tied foreign-funded projects opened the way for newcomer foreign firms from the donor country to "discover" the recipient country, often leading to partnerships with domestic firms, and leading on to more subsequent trade and investment linkages going in both directions and benefiting both sides.

Beggars don't choose

It is also easy to concede that donors are entitled to tie their grants to donor-country suppliers. After all, beggars cannot be choosers, as the saying goes.

But loans, it is argued, are a different matter. Since loans have to be repaid, they still eventually come out of taxpayers' money, bolstering the argument that the borrowing country must be entitled to explore various options to get the best value for its money. Thus, international competitive bidding has increasingly become the norm, especially for the more expensive loans from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. On the other hand, for highly concessional loans from bilateral donors like Japan, UK, Germany and now China—where low interest rates and long repayment terms are equivalent to a grant component—there is some justification for tying the aid, at least partly.

Domestic sins

It is therefore not entirely out of line that China's loans being granted all over the developing world are tied loans. As the newcomer on the donor block, they are merely doing what the older donors had been doing early on, and in some cases, continue to do. One might even argue that the requirement for Chinese firms may not be so objec-

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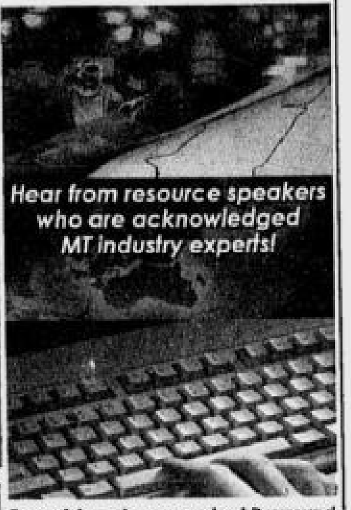

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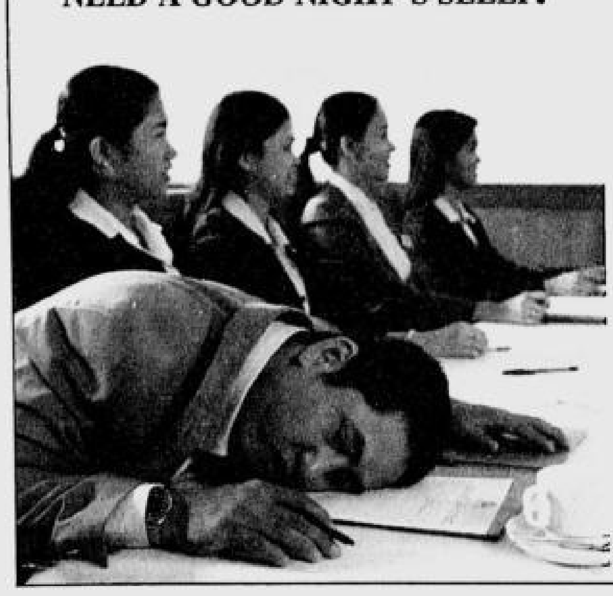

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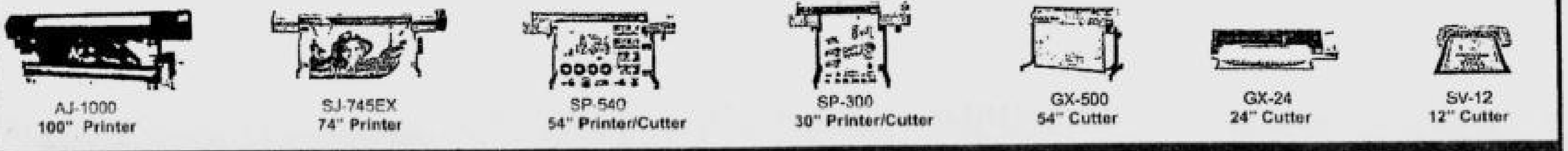

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Banks' property loans rise 3.8% to ₱218B

By Doris C. Dumlao

WITH PROPERTY PRICES REBOUNDING a decade after the Asian currency crisis, Philippine banks are becoming more confident to increase their exposure in the real estate sector, whether in the form of loans backed by property assets or securities issued by property developers.

Real estate exposure of commercial banks grew 3.8 percent to P218 billion in the second quarter from a year ago as real estate-backed loans increased by P7.7 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported on Friday.

Compared to a quarter ago, total exposure also expanded by about 3.8 percent from the P210 billion in real estate-backed assets in their books as of end-March. During the same period, banks' investments in securities issued by real estate companies grew by P200 million.

The majority or 96.5 percent of total real estate loans were held by the bank proper while the remaining 3.5 percent represented assets managed by their trust departments.

"The expansion was driven mainly by the bank proper, where several banks posted net increases in their real estate loans during the quarter, mostly due to new loan releases to property developers," the BSP reported.

The industry's combined real estate loans grew by 4.2 percent to P192.2 billion from P184.5 billion in the previous quarter. As a result, the ratio of real estate loans to total loan portfolio, excluding interbank loans, rose to 11.5 percent from the previous quarter's 10.6 percent.

Real estate loans granted for the construction and development of real estate for commercial purposes including infrastructure projects accounted for 81.2 percent or P156.2 billion of the total while the remaining 18.8 percent or P36 billion were granted for the acquisition of residential units by individual homeowners/borrowers.

There was likewise some improvement in terms of assets backed by real estate.

Past due real estate loans fell by 9.6 percent to P18.1 billion from the previous quarter's P20 billion.

"The improvement was mainly due to the sale of delinquent loans to SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) as well as rigorous collection, settlement, restructuring and foreclosure efforts," the BSP said. *(See related story on Page B2.)*

The extended SPV Law, which will expire in April next year, waives some of the taxes and reduced fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets, to

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PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.2490	1.2654
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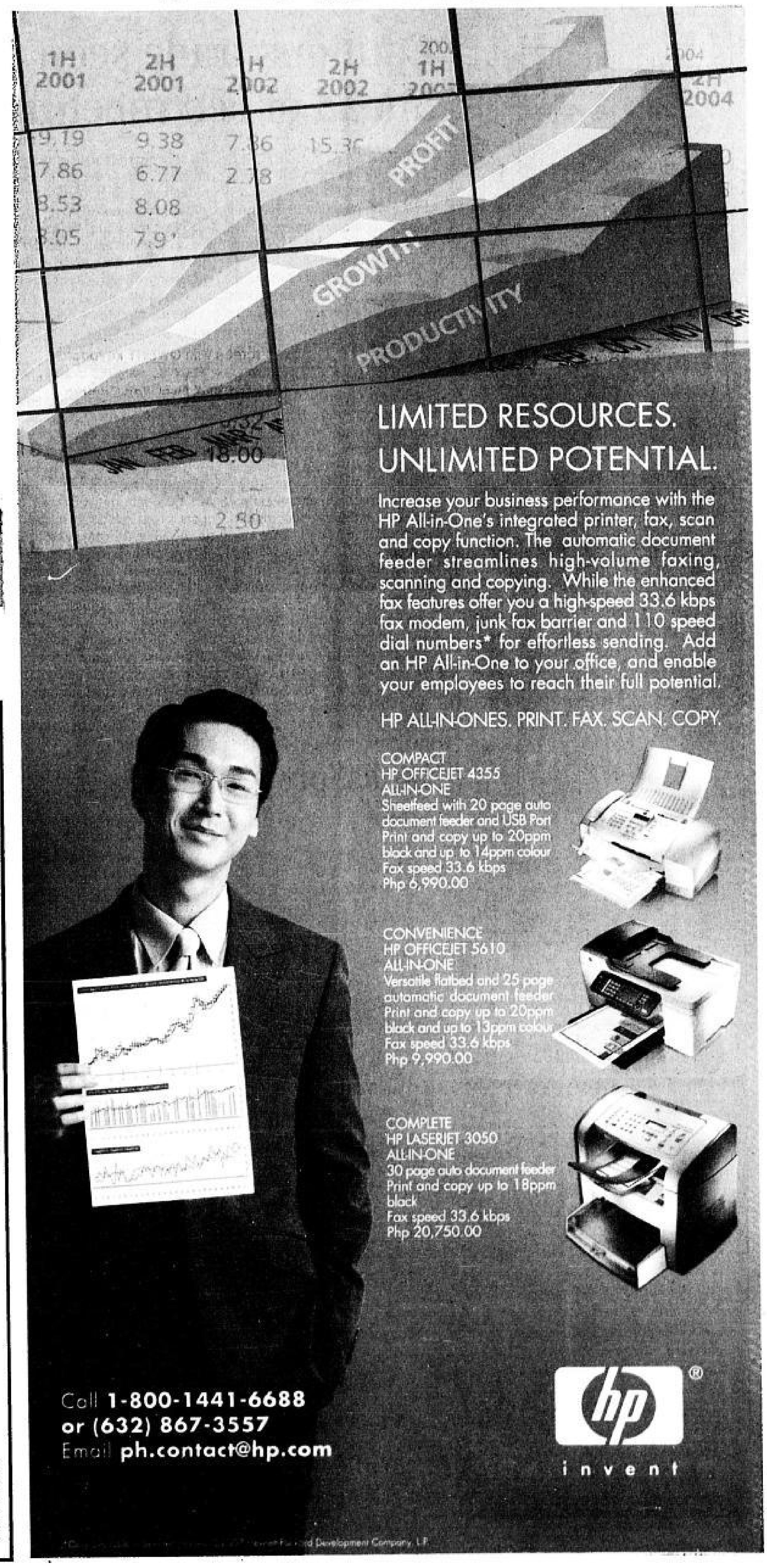

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Alliance Global joins tourism bandwagon

Eyes dev't of 15-ha lot in Mactan

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ALLIANCE GLOBAL GROUP INC., the holding firm of property magnate Andrew Tan, is venturing into the high-growth tourism business.

AGGI president Kingson Sian said the company expected the tourism sector, which still has a few players in the local scene, to contribute 20-25 percent to overall revenues over the next three to four years.

Today, about 40 percent of the group's revenues come from its property business through Megaworld Corp., where AGGI holds a 46-percent stake.

As it enters the tourism sector, this and its other businesses in fast food and brandy manufacturing are seen to contribute more to AGGI's total revenues in the future, thus reducing Megaworld's contribution to about 30-35 percent.

Sian said AGGI was still studying possible locations for tourism projects although he said that the Tan group owns a 15-hectare property in Mactan, Cebu, which may be developed partly for a tourism project.

The company envisions its tourism ventures to be of the same scale as that of Sentosa Island in Singapore, depending on the capital it may allot for these prospective projects.

With the increasing spending power of the Filipino middle-class, priorities have increased from just buying a house and buying a car to traveling.

Megaworld is also closing a deal with the government for the purchase of the 54.5-hectare old Iloilo airport in Mandurriao, Iloilo City, for P1.2 billion in cash.

Sian, however, did not comment on whether this will be part of AGGI's tourism prospects.

Megaworld had said that upon acceptance of its offer and the closing of the deal, the company would apply with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) for a special economic zone license for a project that aims to transform the old Iloilo airport into a new business district.

Megaworld envisions its project to lure major business process outsourcing (BPO) companies interested to set up shop in the Visayas region.

In addition to office buildings for the BPO industry, the project will host educational facilities geared to provide value-added training to equip prospective employees with the necessary skills suited to the requirements of the call centers and other BPO businesses that will be based in the Megaworld project.

Cautious trade seen ahead of Fed meeting

INVESTORS ARE EXPECTED to closely track Wall Street ahead of a Federal Reserve policy meeting on Sept. 18 that may result in possible interest rate cuts to boost a slowing US economy, brokers said.

"I think the mood of the markets will generally be dictated upon by the statement of the Fed during the FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting. The markets are discounting a rate cut but its justification for doing so will be key," said Conrado Bate, president at Citiseconline.com.

Many on Wall Street expect a cut and are debating whether it will be a quarter percentage point or a half percentage point. The Federal Reserve has kept its benchmark fed funds rate unchanged at 5.25 percent for more than year after a string of increases and has not cut rates since 2003.

An interest cut in the US typically weakens the dollar and lends strength to other currencies like the peso, analysts said.

First Metro Investments Corp. vice president Eduardo Banaag Jr. added that markets have discounted a 25-basis-point cut in the forthcoming Fed meeting but not a 50-basis-point cut, which could propel global stock markets up.

"The recession factor will prevail until analysts get a firmer hold of (corporate) third quarter profits in October," Banaag said.

Fund managers said the surge in oil prices has been shrugged off by investors as they instead focus on a surprise cut by the US Fed.

World crude pierced the once elusive $80 mark three times in the last three days, closing above that level last Thursday for the first time.

Last Friday, light sweet crude for October delivery fell 99 cents to settle at $79.10 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after rising earlier to $80.36, a new intraday record.

"The market will likely track the Dow Jones Industrial Index as investors will have to discount the adverse impact of rising crude oil prices as it touched all-time highs," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Banks' property loans ...

From page B3

encourage banks to clean up those bad assets that piled up during the Asian crisis. It also scraps the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value added tax) and reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

Thus, the ratio of soured real estate loans to total loans eased to 9.4 percent from the previous quarter's 10.8 percent. This ratio was likewise an improvement from the year-ago ratio of 13.3 percent.

Maybank

CURRENCIES

September 16, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.720409	1.000000	46.5060
Japan	Yen	0.006259	0.008688	0.4040
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460197	2.026900	94.2630
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.092499	0.128398	5.9713
Switzerland	Franc	0.606916	0.842460	39.1794
Canada	Dollar	0.697193	0.967773	45.0073
Singapore	Dollar	0.476903	0.661989	30.7865
Australia	Dollar	0.604116	0.838574	38.9987
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.912016	2.654069	123.4301
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.192104	0.266660	12.4013
Brunei	Dollar	0.475330	0.659805	30.6849
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000076	0.000106	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.022513	0.031250	1.4533
UAE	Dirham	0.196190	0.272331	12.6650
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.388100	64.5550
Korea	Won	0.000774	0.001074	0.0499
China	Yuan**	0.095920	0.133147	6.1921
Denmark	Kroner	0.134297	0.186418	8.6696
India	Rupee	0.017899	0.024845	1.1554
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.207312	0.287770	13.3830
Mexico	New Peso	0.064907	0.090098	4.1901
New Zealand	Dollar	0.516385	0.716794	33.3352
Norway	Kroner	0.127680	0.177233	8.2424
Sweden	Kroner	0.108077	0.150022	6.9769
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021776	0.030227	1.4057

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Sept. 13, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Sept. 13, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Sept. 14, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	37.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	56	56.5	55	56	188,000
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	63.5	64	63.5	63.5	1,215,600
935	630	China Banking Corp.	800	800	800	800	710
23.5	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	600
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	150,000
75.5	39	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	53	53	50.5	51.5	9,579,300
65.5	33	Philippine National Bank	47	48.5	47	48	242,600
68	41	Philippine Savings Bank	63	63	63	63	500
39.57	14.57	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	667,900
90	49.5	Security Bank Corp.	70	70	69	69	1,067,800
66	42.53	Union Bank of the Philippines	56	56	56	56	400
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.76	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	4,000
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	2	2	1.96	1.98	3,137,000
16.25	2.75	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	10.75	11	10.5	10.5	369,900
42	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	5,000
5	2.95	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.25	3.45	3.25	3.45	7,651,000
3.1	1	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.92	1.92	34,000
1,005.00	225	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	780	780	780	780	10
2,305.00	1,945.00	Sun Life Financial Inc	2,300.00	2,305.00	2,300.00	2,305.00	1,410
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	178,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	593,000
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
70	47.5	First Gen Corp.	66	66.5	65.5	65.5	580,000
92	46	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	75	75	74	74	1,583,400
15	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	2,233,900
105.45	16.59	Manila Electric Co.	76.5	79	76.5	79	650,800
7	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.1	6.1	5.9	6	26,191,000
6.5	3.8	Petron Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	9,604,000
14.75	6.6	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.9	7.1	6.8	6.8	161,000
1.9	0.95	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,270,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	2.95	Alaska Milk Corp	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	10,000
2.95	1.66	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.76	1,162,000
2.6	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	19,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24	24.5	24	24.5	108,000
61	33	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52.5	52.5	52	52.5	20,300
9	4.7	Pancake House Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	3,000
1.96	0.84	RFM Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	255,000
3.85	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	3,000
80	59	San Miguel Corp. "A"	62	62	61	61	39,000
88	60	San Miguel Corp. "B"	63.5	63.5	61	61	1,217,500
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	3,591,200
0.55	0.22	Vitarich Corp	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	150,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.59	EEI Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.25	45,000
21.5	6	Federal Chemicals Inc.	8	8	8	8	2,000
9.2	4.85	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	3,005,000
2	0.28	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.14	1.14	1.1	1.12	1,812,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.35	Chemrez Technologies, Inc	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.55	1,066,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.105	Picop Resources Inc	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	6,320,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.94	A. Soriano Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	330,000
0.17	0.025	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.0975	0.0975	8,600,000
1.28	0.21	APC Group Inc.	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.63	7,580,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.85	225,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	30,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,000,000
9.7	4.9	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	4,877,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	189,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.3	10,999,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.2	2.24	2.2	2.22	859,000
590	375	Ayala Corp.	490	490	485	487.5	836,780
5.8	1.2	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.55	3.7	3.55	3.7	13,368,000
10.25	3.65	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	309,000
6.9	1.06	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	24,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	20,000
3.55	1.16	House of Investments Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.86	231,000
14.5	5.7	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	5,955,000
11.5	0.98	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.55	4.65	2,239,000
8.2	2.8	PAL Holdings Inc.	7	7.1	6.9	6.9	177,000
0.215	0.01	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.205	0.205	0.175	0.185	905,000,000
0.75	0.175	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	1,200,000
452.5	217.7	SM Investments Corp.	345	350	345	347.5	420,220
0.73	0.125	Sinophil Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	6,620,000
1.6	0.9	South China Resources Inc.	1.42	1.48	1.4	1.42	304,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	18	18	18	18	75,000
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,130,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	0.81	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	110,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings, Inc	7.6	8	7.6	7.8	205,000
19.25	11.25	Ayala Land Inc.	14	14.25	14	14	7,251,800
1.88	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	320,000
0.86	0.3	Crown Equities Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	420,000
0.99	0.5	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	4,950,000
0.47	0.048	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	3,850,000
1.48	0.45	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	11,094,000
2.44	1.1	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.42	87,928,000
1.12	0.24	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.64	0.65	4,240,000
4.4	1.69	Megaworld Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.15	3.2	14,004,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	1,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.46	230,000
9.2	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.45	3.9	3.45	3.9	55,000
23	12.5	Robinson Land Corp.	18	18	17.25	17.25	685,500
5.9	1.5	SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	174,000
13.5	6.4	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	6,713,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	350,000
0.49	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.24	2,910,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	60,931,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	16	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	31	31	31	31	23,600
11.75	8.7	GMA Network Inc	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.5	208,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	580,000
1,445.00	1,030.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,325.00	1,325.00	1,320.00	1,320.00	66,380
2,820.00	2,040.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,680.00	2,695.00	2,680.00	2,690.00	256,310
7.9	4.2	Pilipino Telephone Corp	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	245,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	2,350,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	6,304,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	10,400,000
29.5	8	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	15	15	15	15	1,000
0.32	0.043	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.195	23,920,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	450,000
0.0725	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.049	37,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc	2.85	2.95	2.75	2.75	4,330,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	79,000
6.8	3.2	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	295,000
34.5	15.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	32.5	32.5	31	32.5	431,200
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc	1.84	1.9	1.84	1.9	134,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	280,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	1,670,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc	3	3	3	3	278,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc	26.5	26.5	25.5	25.5	1,300
6	1.92	Macroasia Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.2	4.3	1,277,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	21,000
30	10	Paxys Inc	14	14	13.75	14	2,157,800
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	235,500,000
7.6	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5	5.2	5	5.2	75,000
7.7	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.3	51,000
21.25	7.7	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	1,077,600
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	11	11	10.5	10.5	1,700
5	1.8	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	1,000
3.1	0.33	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.74	1.8	1.72	1.8	109,792,000
0.35	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.3	0.31	0.28	0.3	70,600,000
0.42	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	24,920,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.027	0.029	0.027	0.028	411,700,000
0.041	0.019	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.03	0.032	0.03	0.031	84,900,000
30	1.2	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.25	11.25	909,600
0.021	0.0079	Omico Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	27,200,000
6.8	3.25	Philex Mining Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	11,307,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	32	32	32	32	1,700
1.36	0.39	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	100,000
1.8	0.56	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	717,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	3,350,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	91,100,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	144,400,000
29	8.6	PNOC Exploration Corp. "B"	25	25	25	25	700
11.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	48,000
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.025	585,900,000

AVERAGES

Financial	868.60 DOWN	4.99	24,575,730	726,824,610.00
Industrial	4,436.10 DOWN	2.96	61,835,100	623,532,765.00
Holding Firms	1,837.97 UP	15.32	1,195,304,000	948,146,115.00
Property	1,439.35 DOWN	0.32	206,422,300	695,871,565.00
Service	1,605.35 UP	7.48	92,758,590	909,618,295.00
Mining & Oil	6,426.36 UP	165.69	1,803,652,300	360,419,735.00
All Shares Index	2,086.74 UP	3.26		
PSEi	3,294.55 UP	5.33		
		GRAND TOTALS	3,384,548,020	4,264,413,085.00

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Canyon Woods	90,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	2,000,000
Club Filipino	120,000	80,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	Pls. Call*	200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	130,000	Pls. Call
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/180,000*	Pls. Call
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	24,000,000	20,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	18,000,000
Manila Polo	5,500,000	4,500,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	280,000/Pls. Call*	250,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	Pls. Call	180,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	250,000	150,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa C1/C2*/C3**	220,000/600,000**	150,000/580,000*
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/250,000*/350,000**	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	120,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	170,000*/250,000**	130,000*/150,000**
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	240,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/130,000*	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	2,100,000	1,600,000
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Tagaytay Highlands	690,000	630,000
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CEBU COUNTRY CLUB		PLS CALL
CELEBRITY CLUB	120 000	90 000
CLUB FILIPINO		80 000
CLUB PUNTA FUEGO	350 000	PLS CALL
EAGLERIDGE B	PLS. CALL	PLS CALL
EAGLERIDGE C	350 000	PLS CALL
FONTANA A	150 000	PLS CALL
FOREST HILLS B	180 000	PLS CALL
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB B	PLS CALL	200 000
MANILA GOLF CORP	PLS CALL	25 000 000
MANILA GOLF IND	23 000 000	20 000 000
MANILA POLO CLUB	4 800 000	4 500 000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	300 000	250 000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	650 000	PLS CALL
MANILA YACHT CLUB(IND)	350 000	PLS CALL
METROCLUB A	180 000	PLS CALL
MIMOSA C3	PLS. CALL	600 000
ORCHARD A	PLS CALL	150 000
ORCHARD B		280 000
ORCHARD C	PLS. CALL	300 000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	PLS CALL	120 000
RIVIERA GOLF B	PLS CALL	150 000
ROCKWELL CLUB	PLS CALL	230 000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	60 000	
SPA & LODGE	550 000	PLS CALL
SPLENDIDO	150 000	PLS CALL
STA. ELENA A	1 900 000	PLS CALL
SUBIC BAY GOLF CLUB	100 000	PLS CALL
SUMMIT POINT	350 000	PLS CALL
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	350 000	PLS CALL
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	PLS CALL	PLS CALL
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS		650 000
THE PALMS IND	360 000	PLS CALL
TOWER CLUB IND	200 000	PLS CALL
VALLEY GOLF	PLS CALL	220 000
VALLE VERDE	90 000	PLS CALL
WACK WACK	PLS CALL	PLS CALL

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BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	580,000	550,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	480,000	450,000
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	-
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	-	2,000,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	120,000	90,000
CLUB FILIPINO	140,000	90,000
EAGLERIDGE "A"	170,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "B"	250,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "C"	330,000	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	90,000	80,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	330,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	220,000	200,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000	220,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	26,300,000	20,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	23,000,000	18,000,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	4,500,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	300,000	280,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	650,000	-
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	-
MIMOSA (IND)	220,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	160,000	100,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	300,000	280,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	330,000	300,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	170,000	130,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	350,000	250,000
SPA & LODGE	500,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	1,800,000	1,700,000
STA. ELENA "B"	2,300,000	2,050,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	320,000	300,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650,000	-
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	360,000	320,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	90,000
VALLEY GOLF	Please Call	210,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	10,000,000	Please Call

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From page B2

tionable if one considers that Chinese goods and services have tended to be cheaper—the reason, precisely, why China has become the virtual factory of the world.

If there is graft and corruption surrounding certain projects funded by these bilateral loans (and Chinese loans have by no means been unique on this), it is not the government loans per se that we must be wary of, but the commercial transactions that they fund. Too often, unholy deals between corrupt domestic officials and foreign supplier firms too eager to bag a lucrative contract spoil otherwise sound public investments.

Competition is good, even among our creditors. In the end, the responsibility is ours alone, to ensure that the loans we obtain from our competing creditors truly redound to the greatest good for the greatest number of Filipinos.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu.

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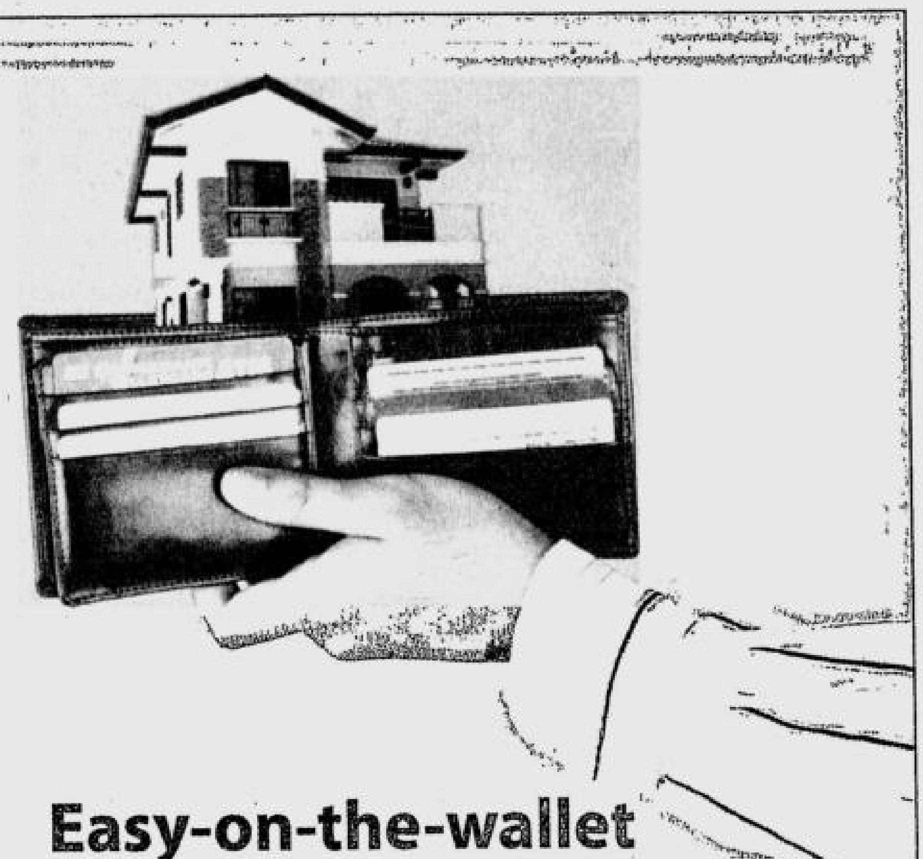

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SEMINARS AND EVENTS (as of September 13, 2007)

October 4, 2007 (Thursday)

Special Events (WTCMM Lobby):

1:00pm - 3:00pm	Product Launching *by:* Univet Agricultural Products
3:30pm - 5:00pm	Cooking Demonstration *by:* Organic Producers Trade Assoc.

October 5, 2007 (Friday)

Seminars (Hall A, WTCMM):

10:30am - 3:00pm	• Management of Sows & Piglets • Growing the Future - Richel Greenhouses • Raising Sunshine, Free-Ranged, Grass-Fed Pasture Poultry *by:* French Le Club *(Seminar Rm. 1)*
10:30am - 12:30pm	How to Start a Meat Section in Small & Medium Sized Supermarkets *by:* Meat Importers Traders Assoc. *(Seminar Rm. 2)* Monitoring & Evaluating the Socio-Economic Impact of BT Corn in the Philippines *by:* Monsanto Phils. *(Seminar Rm. 3)*
1:00pm - 3:00pm	• Nutritional Strategies to Prevent Scouring in Piglets • Biosecurity Measures During Disease Outbreak *by:* Univet *(Seminar Rm. 2)* Technological Trends in Organic Farming & International Organic Certification *by:* Herbana Farms *(Seminar Rm. 3)*
3:30pm - 5:30pm	The Essentials of Managing Common Pig Diseases at Herd Level *by:* San Miguel Foods, Inc. *(Seminar Rm. 2)* High Productivity as a Result of an Optimum Climate *by:* SKOV *(Seminar Rm. 3)*

Special Events (WTCMM Lobby):

10:30am - 5:00pm	*Sponsored by:* San Miguel Foods, Inc.
9:00am - 12:00nn	O! My Gulay Cooking Contest Pinaka-Best Agricultural Harvest Awarding *(Hall A, WTCMM)*

October 6, 2007 (Saturday)

Seminars (Hall A, WTCMM):

10:30am - 12:30pm	Supplying Fresh Produce to the Supermarkets *by:* Phil. Amalgamated Supermarket Assoc. *(Seminar Rm. 1)* Pangasius World Trends & Management Opportunities *by:* Vitarich Corp. *(Seminar Rm. 2)* • Indigenous Plants for Health & Wellness • Avocado & Coconut-Based Products • Essential Oils • Malungay Juice *by:* Bureau of Agricultural Research *(Seminar Rm. 3)*
1:00pm - 3:00pm	All About Herbs (Medicinal Herbs & Culinary Herbs) *by:* Agri-Aqua Network Int'l. *(Seminar Rm. 1)*
1:00pm - 5:30pm	• Philippine Fisheries Investment Environment • Ornamental Fish Raising • Farming of Sea Cucumber, Sea Horse & Abalone • Farming of Sea Urchin • Modular Cage Farming of Bangus • Farming of Red Tilapia • Pond Polyculture of Caranx, Grouper, Red Snapper & Siganid w/ Bangus *by:* Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources *(Seminar Rm. 2)*
1:00pm - 3:00pm	• Temperature Management (Including Non-Refrigerated Techniques) Along the Supply Chain to the Supermarket • Ensuring Quality & Safety of Fresh Produce in Supermarkets *by:* Postharvest Horticulture Training & Research *(Seminar Rm. 3)*
3:30pm - 5:30pm	• Economics of Goat Raising • Goat & Sheep Marketing • Forage & Pasture Development • Health & Nutrition *by:* Federation of Goat & Sheep Producers & Assoc. of the Phils. *(Seminar Rm. 1)* The Organic Challenge: • The Baras Town, Rizal Achievement in Becoming the 1st Organic Town in the Philippines • Updates in the Organic and Slowfood Movements • Earthworms in Your Organic Farm *by:* Organic Producers Trade Assoc. *(Seminar Rm. 3)*

Special Events (WTCMM Lobby):

10:30am - 12:00nn	Agri-Kapihan Forum *by:* Agri-Aqua Network Int'l.
1:00pm - 3:00pm	Cooking Demonstration "Megarantisadong Sarap" *by:* Mega Fishing
3:30pm - 5:00pm	Cooking Demonstration Application of Organic Fiber in Meat Processing for Value Added Products *by:* Bureau of Animal Industry

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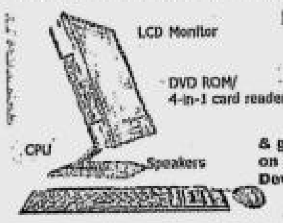

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Ford to export 50,000th car in October

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORD vehicles are shipped out to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

FORD MOTOR CO. PHILIPPINES expects to ship out in October its 50,000th unit manufactured in its Sta. Rosa facility as the company exports an average of 10,000 units of completely built up vehicles a year.

Ford president Richard Baker told the INQUIRER business staff that FMCP was approaching the milestone as the firm maintained its strength as the country's only exporter of CBUs.

The company, which also owns the Mazda brand, assembles the Ford Escape, Ford Focus, Mazda 3 and Mazda Tribute in its facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The vehicles are shipped out to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

The auto maker's latest coup was the export of the Ford Focus to Thailand starting 2005.

This was part of an additional investment of $50 million in 2003 that enabled FMPC to expand its Sta. Rosa plant in preparation for the production of the Focus and Mazda 3 under its New Car program.

FPMC is the only participant in the government's automotive export program that is actually exporting.

It started with about 2,800 units in 2002, reaching an annual high of 13,500 in 2005.

When pressed for details, Baker said the company now preferred to give out data as each year ended.

In previous years, FMPC shared monthly sales data with the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, even though it is not a member of the group.

Last year, then FMPC president Henry T. Co said the firm expected minimal growth of export volumes amid a slowdown observed in the Southeast Asian markets.

Also last year, company officials announced an investment of P1.1 billion to enable the Sta. Rosa plant to manufacture so-called flex fuel engines or those that can run on either pure or blended gasoline.

They said the Sta. Rosa facility would turn out 100,000 units of flex-fuel engines over the next five years valued at about $100 million.

About 80 percent of the output would be for export to the region and the rest would be sold to the local market.

Petron gets ₱12-M grant from the US

By Abigail L. Ho

INDUSTRY LEADER PETRON Corp. has secured a P12-million grant from the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to improve its oil spill response capabilities.

Under the agreement, Petron's operations and facilities will be assessed to identify what else it needs in terms of equipment as well as strengthen its overall emergency plans.

"We appreciate the strong support of the USTDA as we continue to bolster our in-house oil spill response capabilities," Petron president Kamal Al-Yahya said in a statement.

Since 1997, the USTDA has been partially funding some of Petron's project studies.

Once project study undertaken in 2001 was for the engineering design of refinery units, which were commissioned in May 2005.

According to Petron, these two units were the major components of its $100-million investment to produce fuels that comply with the Clean Air Act.

The USTDA also funded the basic engineering design study for Petron's BTX unit, which would produce high-value petrochemicals upon commissioning in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Petron said this latest study on oil spill response would further boost the company's capabilities to respond to such accidents, reinforcing safety and efficiency across its supply chain.

The oil firm is currently the only company with Philippine Coast Guard-approved oil spill contingency plans for its refinery, depots and terminals.

Early this year, Petron joined Oil Spill Response and East Asia Response Ltd., the largest oil spill preparedness and response organization in the world.

This membership complements the oil firm's in-house oil spill response capability, enabling it to call upon world-class resources for prompt and guaranteed response to oil spills of any size.

"We will continue to adopt the latest technologies, equipment and procedures to ensure that we operate in a manner that protects the health and safety of all our stakeholders. We believe that this is essential to the long-term sustainability of our business," Al-Yahya said.

RP, New Zealand start air talks

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINES AND NEW ZEALAND have started negotiations for an air services agreement or ASA.

The highlights of the emerging ASA include a grant of reciprocal rights for New Zealand and Philippine carriers to operate both passenger and cargo flights at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark.

The ASA is also expected to establish rights for Auckland-Manila passenger flights.

Members of the air panel said the two governments made considerable progress in two days of negotiations last Sept. 6 and 7 at the New Zealand Ministry of Transport (MOT) headquarters in Wellington, New Zealand.

The negotiating panel for the Philippines was composed of officials of the Civil Aeronautics Board, Philippine Airlines and Clark International Airport Corp., led by Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin.

The New Zealand negotiating panel was headed by MOT Principal Adviser for Air Services John McIlree and was composed of officials of the MOT and flag carrier Air New Zealand.

The talks deadlocked, however, on such issues as third-country code sharing.

"The Philippines has no problem with code sharing, as long as it is bilateral. We don't want third-country rights thrown in," CAB deputy executive director Porvenir P. Porciuncula told the INQUIRER.

The governments expect to hold a second round of negotiations within three to six months' time, possibly in December 2007, to complete the key agreement.

In the meantime, domestic consultations are ongoing on remaining issues.

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SPV cleanup a success, but borrowers left hurting

From page B2

bank's point man in lobbying for the SPV Law, explained that the dispute between TF Ventures, its court-appointed receiver and the company's new set of creditors (a consortium of Deutsche Bank AG and Cargill Financial Services International) was not entirely unexpected.

Survival vs recovery

"In many cases, the borrowers have a comfort zone with the banks," he said. "Sometimes, *kinakaya-kaya nila ang bangko* (they can bully the banks). But they face more difficulty when the loans are transferred to new creditors who are experts at bad asset recovery."

Morato and his partners stress, however, that their hotel venture was a viable business that is capable of meeting all its obligations with just a little more elbow room from creditors.

They zero in on the court-appointed receiver, Rosario Bernaldo, whose recommendations, he believes, are skewed in favor of Pogi and its foreign principals.

"Her recommendations are even more generous to Pogi than Pogi's own report," said Morato's business partner, Truman Becker. "We want her replaced with someone who is more fair."

TF Ventures has now petitioned the court to replace Bernaldo with another receiver whom they believe would treat the company "more equitably"—a common complaint that has taken years to resolve in other similar cases.

Meanwhile, emboldened by the apparent success of its asset cleanup with Pogi, LandBank is preparing to sell off another P4 billion worth of bad assets in the fourth quarter of this year.

The plan represents more good news for BSP's Espenilla, who stresses the importance of a stable and liquid banking system. But it is bad news for troubled borrowers like TF Ventures, who must now face hard-nosed asset recovery experts.

"We are fighting for our survival," Becker said.

Oil price surge worries BSP

From page B1

tion continues to be benign and the risks continue to moderate because you have monetary growth remaining at below 20 percent," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said.

Excess money supply tends to exert upward pressure on the prices of basic goods as consumers are usually tempted to spend more when they have more cash in their pockets.

"But oil prices are becoming a concern," Guinigundo said, noting the rise in prices to about $72 a barrel for the benchmark Dubai crude.

US crude oil traded above a record $80 a barrel last week as a hurricane threatened refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Definitely, it will have an impact on inflation, not immediately in September because they (oil companies) still have inventory," Guinigundo said.

The impact of the recent surge in oil prices, he said, would likely be felt starting October.

"Of course, what we're hoping to happen is that with the decision of Opec (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) to pump more, there could be some room for stabilization," Guinigundo said.

"But there's a downside risk again because there's going to be a hurricane in Texas. And then, of course there's still continuing risk aversion," he said.

Across the globe, investors are avoiding assets from emerging markets like the Philippines given the worsening credit crunch in the United States due to rising delinquencies in subprime mortgages.

The US Fed, which has given assurance that it will protect the US economy from recession, is thus expected to cut rates by at least 25 basis points this week to help ease the credit crunch.

In the case of the Philippines, Guinigundo said the BSP was expected to contain the country's annual inflation rate this year below 3.1 percent despite the upsurge in oil prices and the adverse impact of the prolonged dry spell on farm output.

Fortune urges DOF to amend Pall Mall decision

By Michelle V. Remo

FORTUNE TOBACCO CORP. has asked the Department of Finance to reconsider its decision to lower the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes produced by its competitor, British American Tobacco (BAT).

In a letter to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Fortune president Antonio Abaya echoed the complaint earlier raised by Philip Morris that lowering the excise tax was prohibited by the Sin Tax Law of 2005.

Because imported Pall Mall cigarettes were already taxed at P26.06 a pack at the time these were still sold in duty-free shops, then the excise tax should be kept at that level and not brought down to P6.74 a pack.

BAT argued, however, that the importation of Pall Mall ended late last year and that the P6.74 tax rate was already applied to its locally produced cigarettes.

BAT added that Pall Mall produced here has been in the market since 2004, even before duty-free shops imported the cigarette brand, so the tax rate on domestically produced cigarettes should apply.

But Fortune said the move of the DOF to lower the excise tax rate on Pall Mall would defeat one of the objectives of the Sin Tax Law, which was to prevent firms from going around tax laws.

"Since tax laws are intended to cover future situations, in the event that Pall Mall cigarette brands are again imported and brought to the Philippines for sale, what then would its excise tax classification and rate be?" Fortune said.

Under the Sin Tax Law, the higher the cigarette price, the higher the excise tax. But once a cigarette is classified under a certain tax rate, the rate should no longer be reduced even if prices change in the future.

"Simply put, the law seeks to prevent hedging or conditioning market forces schemes, whereby manufacturers and importers would simply suffer the loss in the short term and await the final classification to be issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and thereafter upon getting it, increase retail prices and enjoy its profits at the expense of the government, in effect a tax subsidy sanctioned by law, clearly not the intent and purpose of RA 9334 (the Sin Tax Law)," Fortune said.

The BIR issued a ruling last year raising the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes to P26 a pack from P6.74, saying the higher tax rate should apply because Pall Mall cigarettes were being imported at the time.

BAT, however, appealed the BIR's decision with the DOF, the BIR's mother agency on grounds that domestically produced Pall Mall were introduced in the market even before imported ones were sold in duty-free shops.

The DOF, upon approval by Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr., sided with BAT and kept Pall Mall's excise tax rate at P6.74 per pack.

Jose Mario Bunag, who was internal revenue commissioner at the time the BIR ruled for an increase in the tax on Pall Mall, reacted against the DOF's decision. He reiterated the Sin Tax Law's provision against downward classification of excise tax.

'NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT'

RP land not for sale to China, Yap says

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur C. Yap assured the public that the Philippine government was not selling its land to China.

In a Kapihan forum held at the Sulo Hotel last week, Yap clarified that of the 18 contracts, only four were signed by the Department of Agriculture.

"These contracts are meant to strengthen the agriculture sector and are not connected to any procurement of Philippine lands," he explained.

The controversial RP-China deals were made in January this year during the Asean Leaders' Summit, where the two governments signed agreements covering biofuel, agribusiness and fishery sectors.

"These deals are framework agreements and can possibly bring in more investments in the country. We are not selling anything to any foreigners," Yap explained.

He assured the public that there was nothing to worry about these agreements.

"Six congressmen want to investigate this issue and there is no problem if they want to see the documents since these have all been made public," Yap said.

Eugenia Go, DA's China desk officer, earlier said these deals were agreements for these Chinese companies to come to the Philippines and invest in the agriculture sector.

"We are not putting the country's resources in the hands of a monopoly power such as China. As we did to other foreign investors, we are only facilitating the entry," Yap said.

Yap earlier said that these agreements were similar to what the government did when it asked the Japanese to come to the Philippines and put up their car plants here, or when it asked foreign investors to put up call centers and technoparks.

He also stressed that these investments would be beneficial to the farmers because these would increase the pace of infrastructure development in the agriculture sector.

Consequently, this could increase productivity and generate more jobs in the countryside.

Yap also clarified that these agreements were "private sector contracts" and that the government had not released money nor extended any bonds.

"These RP-China business deals are not 'unconstitutional' or 'insane.' It's a great way to develop agriculture especially since there have not been too many investments given to this sector," Yap said.

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PNOC-EDC to take over four more BOT plants

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp., a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co., will take over on Sept. 25 the operation of four geothermal power plants in Leyte that are under build-operate-transfer contracts with Ormat Leyte Co. Ltd.

The four facilities are the Mahanagdong A and B Topping Cycle Plants, Tongonan Topping Cycle Plant and Malitbog Bottoming Cycle Plant, which have a combined installed capacity of 51 megawatts (MW).

The plants all use geothermal energy from PNOC-EDC's Leyte Geothermal Production Field (LGPF).

According to PNOC-EDC, geothermal fluids go to the optimization plants either before they are directed to the main power plants (referred to as "topping") or after being directed to the main power plants (called "bottoming") for additional electrical output.

The Tongonan 1, Malitbog and Mahanagdong A and B plants provide power to the National Power Corp. for distribution to Cebu, through the Leyte-Cebu transmission interconnection project, and to Luzon through the Leyte-Luzon interconnection project.

The four plants are the only ones under BOT contracts that PNOC-EDC has yet to take over.

Just this July, PNOC-EDC assumed the operation of the 232.5-MW Malitbog and 180-MW Mahanagdong geothermal power plants from CalEnergy International Ltd. when the 10-year cooperation period under the plants' respective energy conversion agreements ended.

Last year, PNOC-EDC took over the operation of the 132-MW Upper Mahiao power plant, also from CalEnergy.

The Leyte Optimization Plants, together with the Upper Mahiao, Malitbog and Mahanagdong facilities, all use steam from the LGPF.

The LGPF is PNOC-EDC's biggest steam field, powering nearly 60 percent of the company's total installed capacity.

PNOC-EDC is the country's largest geothermal energy producer, with an installed capacity of 1,198 MW, or 60 percent of the country's total installed geothermal generating capacity.

Microsoft taps Clark firm

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—Microsoft owner Bill Gates has tapped Japanese firm SMK Electronics Corp. here to make a component for a new product that Microsoft is developing, an SMK official said.

Herrie Raymund Rivera, SMK general administration manager, told "Aksyon Central Luzon" host Angelo Lopez Jr., who is also Clark Development Corp. public relations chief, that Gates chose SMK for two reasons.

These are the "capability of the firm to produce the receiver blaster for Microsoft and the Filipino craftsmanship needed to manufacture the software system."

CDC, the state corporation managing the development of this former United States military air base, said that SMK is one of the top 20 Japanese electronics companies in the world and is one of the top 10 exporting firms in Clark.

It makes and assembles touch panel glass display, keyboard, remote control and other related electronic products.

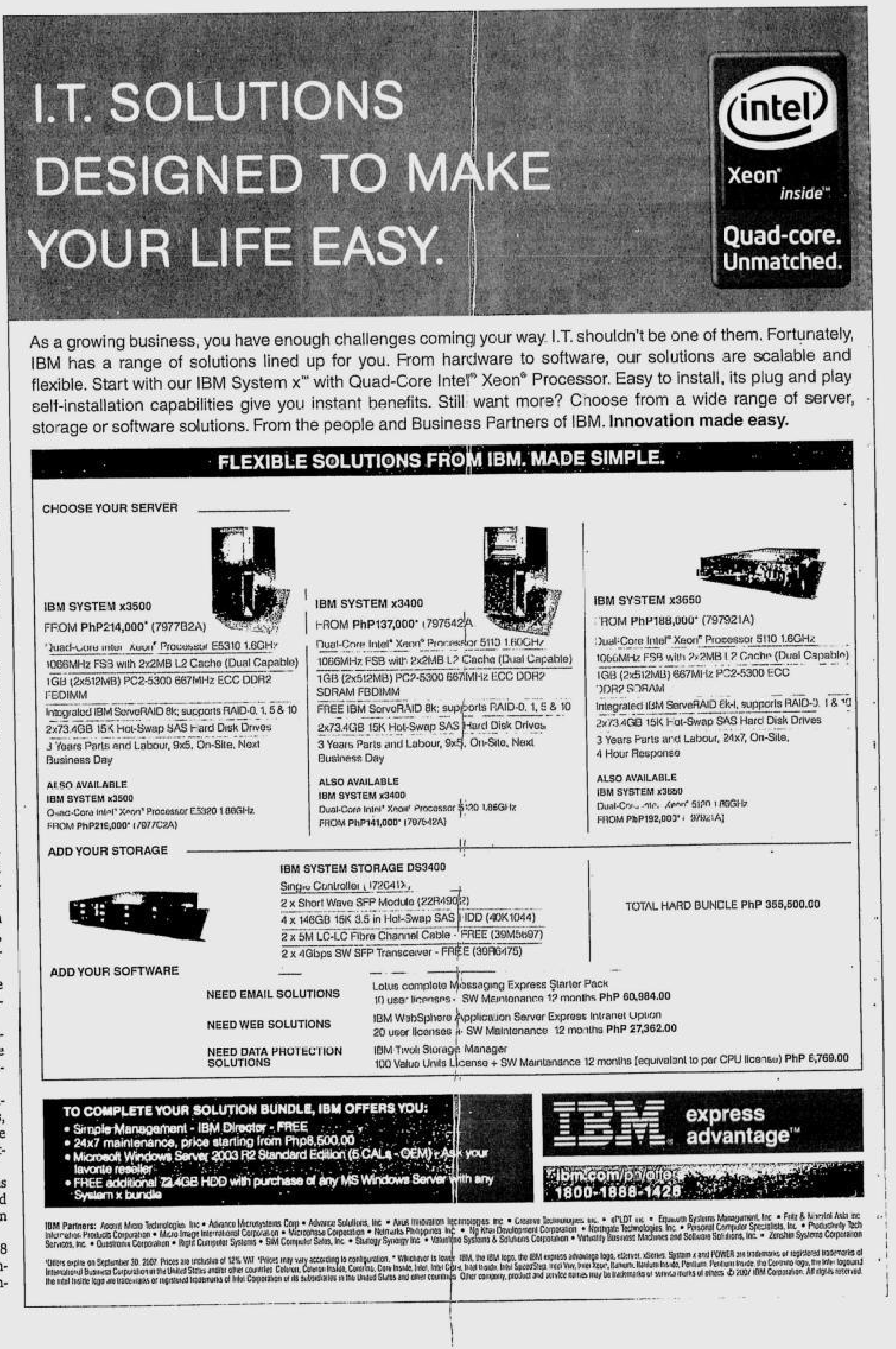
The SMK in Clark makes the connector, charger and bluetooth devices for Nokia.

The value of products it exported out of this free port as of June this year totaled more than $6 million, CDC reports said.

Clark is now host to 36 semiconductor and electronic firms, which have committed more than P5.07 billion in investments.

The CDC enterprise operations and monitoring department said Clark exported $1.16 billion worth of products last year.

At least $790 million or 68 percent of the amount was contributed by information technology (IT) firms.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BSP to acquire ₱40B in fresh capital

Gov't plans to issue peso-denominated bonds to raise fund

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, currently reeling from huge foreign exchange losses, will soon get P40 billion in fresh capital in a single tranche through a concrete funding scheme that will not strain the national government's finances.

Under the scheme, the government will issue P40 billion worth of 10-year peso-denominated bonds and remit all proceeds to the BSP. Later, the government will create a special purpose trust (SPT) entity that shall build up the funds needed to pay bondholders when the securities mature in 10 years.

According to sources in the government, officials will sign a multi-year obligation to remit P4 billion each year to the SPT. To grow the funds, the money in the SPT will, in turn, be invested in various instruments.

In effect, the SPT will become a self-liquidating entity whose only role is to prepare the money to pay off the P40-billion bond issue.

"At the end of 10 years, you have money set aside to pay for the maturing bond," one source said.

The source declined to say exactly when they plan to float the bonds, but he said the scheme has not been included in the 2008 budget. The government is expected to infuse the capital in the BSP in 2009.

"Its okay because in 2008, the government intends to wipe out its deficit, while in 2009, there's already going to be a surplus," the source said.

Since last year, the BSP's profitability has been under pressure due to losses incurred with the peso's sharp appreciation against the dollar, as well as the high cost of mopping up excess liquidity from the strong inflow of foreign funds, particularly remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The P40-billion capital infusion is seen to bolster the BSP's capacity to provide monetary stability.

Based on the latest unaudited BSP income statement, the institution incurred P31.7 billion in net losses in the first semester, mainly due to P41.83 billion worth of foreign exchange losses.

IT boom has come and gone, study says

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LARGE FIRMS THAT HAVE FUELED the global information technology outsourcing boom and have put developing countries such as India and the Philippines on investors' radar screens are getting to be picky, according to a recent study.

"We do believe that the boom years for IT outsourcing growth have come and gone," said Brian Tumpowsky in a statement. "Buyers are learning to be more selective and strategic in the way they approach outsourcing and, as such, the pace of growth is slowing."

Tumpowsky is co-author of the 2006 Global IT Outsourcing Study conducted by Diamond Management and Technology Consultants (DMTC), a Chicago-based IT management consulting firm.

DMTC's study reveals that buyers are still prematurely terminating contracts, and questioning the value of onshore outsourcing. They are also struggling with the basics of determining what to outsource, measuring effectiveness and managing a global pool of resources.

The study further revealed that buyers are becoming more selective and strategic in the way they approach outsourcing decisions, which is slowing the buying process.

Buyers are concerned about contract renegotiations, extensions and terminations to seek additional outsourcing opportunities.

In 2006, 8 percent of offshore buyers said they plan to decrease their levels of outsourcing over the next 12 months. This is compared to DMTC's previous study in 2004 in which none of the buyers said they would decrease the amount of outsourcing they were doing.

Firms are reining in outsourcing for three reasons: either they mistakenly outsourced a process or function that is core to their business and are now bringing those back in; their provider over-promised and under-delivered; or, the complexity of managing and measuring outsourcing projects and relationships overshadowed the benefits.

This however does not signal the death knell for IT outsourcing.

DMTC said the industry is alive and will continue to grow well into the future, although at a slower pace.

The pace of growth has declined significantly over the past several years. In 2004, 86 percent of all buyers told DMTC that they were going to increase their level of offshore outsourcing—albeit at a slower pace than in years past. By 2005, that number had slipped to 70 percent and today sits at an all-time low of 64 percent.

The good news is, overall, the percentage of buyers satisfied with their IT outsourcing decisions remains quite high, with 71 percent of buyers saying they were happy with their offshore providers. In 2005, the offshore satisfaction rate was only 62 percent.

The study polled hundreds of senior executives mainly based in the United States and Europe and studied industry trends over the past 12 months in the areas of spending, buyer satisfaction, outsourcing impact and leadership of the changing outsourcing market.

Tumpowsky is arriving in Manila to present a preview of global outsourcing trends and strategies for 2007 at the Makati Shangri-La starting on Oct. 2.

WESM operator urges ERC to reverse ruling

By Abigail L. Ho

SEEKING TO AVERT A POSSIBLE P2.60-PER-kilowatt-hour increase in consumer power rates in Luzon, the Philippine Electricity Market Corp., operator of the wholesale electricity spot market, is urging the Energy Regulatory Commission to reverse a recent ruling regarding prices at the electricity bourse in September and October last year.

The original WESM settlement prices in September and October 2006 were decreased by the National Power Corp. In lowering the original settlement prices, Napocor based its decision on the time-of-use (TOU) rates.

But the ERC later restored the prices to their original high figures, which prompted the PEMC to file a motion for reconsideration last Friday.

In its motion, the PEMC urged the ERC to reconsider its Aug. 14 decision, saying the readjusted prices would only burden consumers. It said power buyers at the electricity bourse would be forced to pass on to their customers the additional costs brought on by the increase in settlement prices in September and October 2006.

"Considering that the implementation of the questioned decision would surely have a huge impact on the consumers, there is a need to immediately suspend the effectivity of the said decision until after the ... commission has resolved the instant motion for reconsideration," PEMC said.

Teves steps in to resolve opposing CTPL proposals

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves will soon step into the fray over the compulsory third-party liability (CTPL) and work out a compromise between the nonlife insurance industry and the regulatory agencies.

Teves said he would schedule a meeting this week with Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, representatives of the Philippine Insurers and Reinsures Association Inc. (Pira), Insurance Commissioner Eduardo Malinis and other parties concerned.

During the proposed meeting, Teves hopes that all parties will get to thresh out their differences over the CTPL problem and agree on a solution.

The conflict stems from a proposal for the Government Service Insurance System to become the sole provider of CTPL insurance, and eliminate the rampant sale of fake insurance policies to vehicle owners. The Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) backs the GSIS proposal.

The Insurance Commission, when it was still under Evangeline Escobillo, opposed the GSIS model, saying it would displace nonlife insurance firms from the CTPL business. The Insurance Commission, however, reversed its stand when Escobillo was sacked and replaced by Eduardo Malinis.

The insurance firms, represented by Pira, also opposed the GSIS model, saying that a monopoly was unconstitutional. Pira added that thousands of CTPL brokers stand to lose their jobs.

Pira brought the matter to the Makati City Regional Trial Court, which last month issued a preliminary injunction on the DOTC's order to implement the GSIS model. The government meanwhile implemented a so-called "interim solution" that was earlier agreed upon by the DOTC and insurance firms.

Pira said in an earlier statement that the interim solution had resulted in the decrease in sale of fake insurance policies. Pira added that there was no need for the Insurance Commission to insist on implementing the GSIS model to address fraudulent activities.

But Malinis had said he found the GSIS model to be superior in addressing fraud. He added the commission would immediately implement the GSIS model once the court decides in its favor.

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DA plans avian flu fund from gamefowl revenues

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULture is considering the possibility of setting up an Avian Influenza defense fund from poultry gaming revenues.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said on Friday that the DA was looking into the idea of tapping the P50-billion gamefowl subsector as a possible source of funds to combat the dreaded bird flu.

DA is already in talks with the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders to put the proposal into action.

The AI defense fund will be used to further strengthen efforts of the DA and the Bureau of Animal Industry to keep the country free from bird flu.

With the country as the only bird flu-free country in Southeast Asia, Yap said local poultry raisers and growers were in a position to expand their export markets.

Yap explained that Singapore and Brunei could not be considered free of the dreaded Avian Influenza, because they do not have poultry industries to speak of.

Gamefowl breeders, along with the whole poultry sector, would directly benefit from the AI funds, which would be used for various programs such as disease containment and prevention and corn production.

Currently, the DA is setting up three more AI diagnostic laboratories in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Cebu and Zamboanga.

These additional laboratories, once completed, will complement the ongoing work being done at the Regional Avian Influenza Diagnostic Laboratory, in Pampanga, the country's first diagnostic facility that can promptly detect the AI virus.

As for corn, the DA is banking on the quick turnaround planting program to help increase production yields and lower the cost of poultry feed.

Corn is a major ingredient in animal feeds.

Yap said he had ordered the BAI and Livestock Development Council to look into drafting a compensation and insurance program, which can be an incentive for raisers and producers who would voluntarily report any outbreaks.

The insurance can also be used for poultry farms that will be hit by any disease or virus.

Yap added that the DA had sought partnerships with local governments for the prompt detection of any disease outbreak.

ETHANOL INVESTMENT Ronnie Co (3rd from left), president & CEO of PPC International Corp. (PPCIC), signs an agency agreement with Sandy Han (3rd from right), managing Director of SD-MECO, a Chinese equipment manufacturer.

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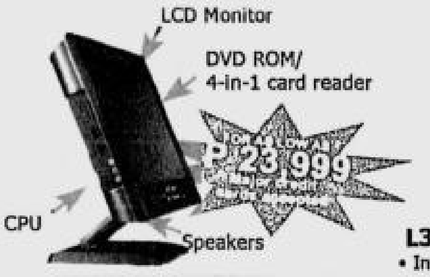

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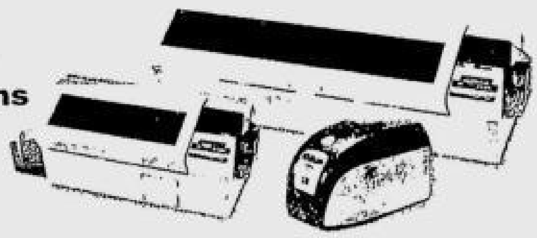

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HYUNDAI WINS FOUR AUTOPACIFIC 2007 IDEAL VEHICLE AWARDS

SONATA, ELANTRA, TUCSON AND ENTOURAGE EARN TOP CATEGORY HONORS

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif., 09/05/2007 Automotive research and consulting firm AutoPacific announced today that Hyundai has won the 2007 Ideal Vehicle Award in four product segments:

- Most Ideal Premium Mid-Size Car: Hyundai Sonata
- Most Ideal Compact Car: Hyundai Elantra
- Most Ideal Compact Crossover SUV: Hyundai Tucson*
- Most Ideal Minivan: Hyundai Entourage

*Hyundai Tucson also took home the Vehicle Satisfaction Award

AutoPacific's second annual Ideal Vehicle Awards (IVA) ranked auto manufacturers for how closely their 2007 model year cars or trucks came to matching owners' expectations and criteria. The vehicles that customers said they would change the least were considered the most "ideal." Measurements for the award include consumer trust, anticipation, expectations and reality.

"Hyundai has done an outstanding job understanding their target buyer and is creating the product that is 'ideal' for its buyers," said AutoPacific's President, George Peterson.

"These awards are a reflection of Hyundai's continued commitment to our customers," said John Krafcik, vice president, Product Development and Strategic Planning, Hyundai Motor America. "The Hyundai brand stands for industry-leading quality, superior standard safety technology, and great value - with these values we'll continue to work hard to meet the expectations of our customers."

To determine the winners, AutoPacific asked owners to rate their new car or truck on how close it came to "ideal" in the following areas: exterior size; passenger roominess; cargo space; driver's seat comfort; driver's seat visibility; interior technology; power; ease of getting in and out; interior storage compartments; and tires and wheels. The IVA ratings reflect input from buyers of new vehicles purchased from September 2006 through December 2006. Over 24,000 respondents provided input for these awards.

AUTOPACIFIC

AutoPacific is a future-oriented automotive marketing and product-consulting firm. Every year it publishes a wide variety of syndicated studies for the automotive industry. The firm also conducts extensive proprietary research and consulting for auto manufacturers, distributors, marketers and suppliers worldwide. Additional information can be found at www.autopacific.com.

HYUNDAI MOTOR AMERICA

Hyundai Motor America, headquartered in Fountain Valley, Calif. is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of Korea. Hyundai cars and sport utility vehicles are distributed throughout the United States by Hyundai Motor America and are sold and serviced by more than 750 Hyundai dealerships nationwide.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF VARIOUS SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES/ASSETS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (MOELCI II)

ERC CASE NO. 2006-458 MC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO),
Applicant.
x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on August 13, 2007, the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) filed an application for the approval of the sale of its various sub-transmission lines/assets within the franchise area of Misamis Occidental II Electric Cooperative (MOELCI II).

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **October 1, 2007 (Monday) at three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 P.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.**

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA**, and **JOSE C. REYES**, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 14th day of August, 2007 at Pasig City.

ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III

(PDI – September 17, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Public Estates Authority)
7th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200 Bldg., 107 Paseo de Roxas St.,
Legaspi Village, 1226 City of Makati
Tel. Nos.: (02) 817-4711 to 13: (02) 813-1441 to 45 • Facsimile No.: (02) 815-2662
Website: www.pea.gov.ph • Email: info@pea.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

TEN (10) – HECTARE BASECO RECLAMATION PROJECT (INFR 07-016)
Engineering Island, North of South Harbor, Port Area, Manila

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippines Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	: **TEN (10) – HECTARE BASECO RECLAMATION PROJECT**
Location	: Engineering Island, North of South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
Brief Description	: The Project will involve the island reclamation of ten (10) hectares, inclusive of the areas for roads and open spaces. The land shall be developed into mixed residential and commercial uses and shall be owned by the National Government (NG), which shall make the area available to the market for its intended land uses. The land shall be available by June 2008.
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	: **Two Hundred Fifty-Two Million Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php252,200,000.00)**, Philippine Currency
Contract Duration	: Six (6) Months

Prospective bidders should possess a valid **PCAB License with Size Range – Large B; License Category – AAA and Classification GE-5; Port, Harbor or Offshore Engineering**, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check / Screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), Third Edition.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	September 18-25, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	September 18-25, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	September 26-October 3, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	October 9-12, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	October 16-23, 2007
6. Pre-Bid Conference	October 30, 2007 (10:00 AM)
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	November 14, 2007 (1:15 PM)

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the PRA Office, 7th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, upon their submission of the LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00)** to the PRA Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000.00)** to the PRA Cashier.

The PRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids. The PRA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **JAIME R. MILLAN**
BAC Chairman

ERRATUM: In the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Ten (10) Hectare BASECO Reclamation Project (INFR 07-016) published on September 8, 2007, **"PCAB License with Category of Large A or above" should have read "PCAB License with Size Range – Large B; License Category — AAA and Classification GE-5: Port, Harbor and Offshore Engineering"**.

(PDI–September 8 & 17, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF VARIOUS SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES/ASSETS WITHIN THE FRANCHISE AREA OF DAVAO DEL SUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (DASURECO)

ERC CASE NO. 2006-457 MC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO),
Applicant.
x - x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on August 13, 2007, the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) filed an application for the approval of the sale of its various sub-transmission lines/assets within the franchise area of Davao del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. (DASURECO).

The Commission has set the application for the initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **October 2, 2007 (Tuesday) at three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 P.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City**.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA**, and **JOSE C. REYES**, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 14th day of August, 2007 at Pasig City.

ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III

(PDI – September 17, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office III
PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., San Agustin, City of San Fernando
Healthline (046) 963-7148 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB No. III-07-003

PhilHealth Regional Office III (PRO III), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all duly registered Janitorial Services firms to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Procurement of Janitorial and Other Related Services
Location	PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., City of San Fernando
Brief Description	20 utility personnel for PRO III and its service offices
Approved Budget for the Contract	Php 2,849,000.00
Contract Duration	One (1) year
Delivery Period	Within 15 days after issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	September 10 to 24, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	September 24, 2007 at 1:30 PM
3. Opening of Bids	October 08, 2007 at 1:30 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	October 09 to 24, 2007
5. Post-Qualification	October 25 to November 02, 2007
6. Notice of Award	November 16, 2007

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,800.00 to the Cashier of PRO III.

(Sgd.) **PRISCILLA G. ASUNCION**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–September 10 & 17, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment
(Bid & Re-bid) and Supplies (Re-bid)
(Gen. Appropriations Act 2007 & Continuing Appropriation)

1. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, through the General Appropriations Act 2007 and Continuing Appropriations intends to apply the sum of *Twenty Seven Million, Three Hundred Fifty Nine Thousand, Two Hundred Thirty Seven Pesos and Two Centavos (Php27,359,237.02)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment (Five Million, Six Hundred Fifty Eight Thousand, Two Hundred Forty Eight Pesos and Twenty Five Centavos P5,658,248.25), and Supplies (Twenty One Million, Seven Hundred Thousand, Nine Hundred Eighty Eight Pesos and Seventy Seven Centavos P21,700,988.77).* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall automatically be rejected at Bid opening.
2. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Supply and Delivery of Hospital Equipment and Supplies (Bid and Re-Bid).* Delivery of the GOODS required is: *for supplies 10 calendar days and for equipment 30-60 calendar days.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL BAC Chairman, Luz R. Rosales and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 1:00-5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address given below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) per category for supplies and One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 1,500.00) for equipment.* The method of payment will be *Cash.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *October 1, 2007 / 1:30 PM at GCGMH WELLNESS Corner.*
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the *GCGMH Audio Visual Room on or before 10:00 A.M. on the scheduled opening of bids* per category. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Bid Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash / Manager's Check	One percent (1%)
2. GSIS Bond	Two and a half percent (2½%)

8. Bid opening shall be on the following schedules listed below at **10:00 A.M. at GCGMH Audio-Visual Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders'** representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

Date	Category
October 15, 2007	Drugs and Medicine Supplies
October 18, 2007	Medical Equipment
	Non-Medical Equipment
October 22, 2007	Laboratory Supplies
October 24, 2007	Medical / Surgical Supplies
October 25, 2007	Dental Supplies
	X-ray Supplies
	Office Supplies
	Medical Oxygen Supplies
	Linen Supplies
October 26, 2007	Miscellaneous Supplies
	Housekeeping Supplies
	Dietary Supplies
	Engineering Supplies

9. The GOVERNOR CELESTINO GALLARES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital
Luz R. Rosales, BAC Chairman
Dormitory Manager
Miguel Parras St., Tagbilaran City, Bohol
Tel. No. (038) 411-4868 / (038) 411-4869 / (038) 501-7531 loc. 242
Fax No. (038) 411-3181
E-mail address: gcgmh_bohol@yahoo.com.ph

(Sgd.) **LUZ R. ROSALES**
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI–September 17, 2007)

SULTAN KUDARAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat
Tels: 064-200-3155/ 4050; 064-477-0326; Fax: 064-200-3156

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SUKELCO) invites Sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for different projects funded under General Fund:

1. Line Constructions at different Barangays of Sen. Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat which includes materials, labor (including ROW) clearing, and hauling and overhead charges for the following projects:

	3-Phase	1-Phase	U.B.	O.S.	Total Project Cost
1. Brgy. Gapok, SNA	8.272	1.260	8.007	1.460	7,100,158.88
2. Brgy. Sewod, SNA	6.994	0.310	4.684	0.545	4,632,825.93
3. Brgy. Limuhay, SNA		2.438	2.078	0.400	1,217,823.65
4. Brgy. Langgal, SNA		4.835	2.370	1.185	2,051,862.77
Total Km of Lines	15.266	8.843	17.139	3.590	15,002,671.23

2. Supply and Delivery of Construction Materials for Brgy. Kraan, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat with maximum material cost of Php 1, 284,425.93
3. Supply and Delivery of Special Equipment Materials
4. Supply and Delivery of Material Requirement for Big Loads.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain additional information and inspect Bidding Documents at the office of the ISD Manager/ BAC Chairman Guia R. Victorio.

Bidding Documents may be purchased, starting **September 20, 2007** by an interested Eligible Bidder upon submission of written application to the BAC Chairman and upon payment of a non-refundable fee amounting to Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00) for item number one and one-time-pay of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 2,500.00) for items two, three and four.

Sealed envelope containing the technical and financial proposals in separate envelopes duly marked as such will be received by the BAC at the Board Room on or before 10:00 A.M., **October 4, 2007** at which time and place the technical proposals will be opened and evaluated. The financial proposals of bidders found eligible to bid will then be opened and read in the presence of Bidder's representatives who choose to attend, otherwise, they will be returned unopened to ineligible bidders.

A pre-bid conference will be held on **September 24, 2007** at 10:00 A.M at the Board Room.

All bids submitted must be accompanied by a bid security, in cash or cashier's check, in the amount of equivalent to 2-1/2% of the amount of bid. This bid security shall be valid at least 150 days starting from the date of bid opening.

The Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc. hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects of infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the cooperative.

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **DEMETRIO O. JEREZ**
General Manager

(Sgd.) **GUIA R. VICTORIO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Sept. 16 & 17, 2007)

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Message of Thanks

The family of the late

ILUMINADA SUPAN PANLILIO

who joined our heavenly father, on September 8, 2007

express their heartfelt gratitude and wish for God's blessing to those who visited, condoled, kept vigil, offered Masses, flowers, donations, Mass cards and attended the funeral rites.

Special thanks to the Chorus Paulinus and Couples for Christ for their songs and prayers.

MANUEL HICARTE MATEOS, SR.

Formerly Assistant Principal of La Salle Greenhills

Peacefully joined our Creator and his loving wife ***Consuelo de Vera Mateos*** *at 10:20 p.m. on 14 September 2007 at the age of 82.*

He shall be missed by his dearest children **Aurora, Sylvia & Billy, Manny, Mike & Elicia, Mel & Jun, Elvira;** grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives & friends.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels & Crematorium, Makati City.

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Our Beloved **Mama Fely**

Felipa Bautista Geslani

of Baguio City and Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan
(May 1, 1925 - September 16, 2007)

peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 82.

She joins her late husband **Dr. Ireneo "Ges" Geslani** and is survived by her children and spouses: **Tess** & **Mong Quintos** (†), **Inyong**, **Marcelle** & **Freddie Salinda**, **Philip** & **Jessica Agcaoili**, **Pinky** & **James Sandoval**, **Liza** & **Dino Jalandoni**; her grandchildren: **Andre** & **Rachel**, **Anton** & **Iris** and **Ching Quintos**; **Sarah**, **Sandy**, **Samboy** and **Sabrina Salinda**; **Kitty** and **Janina Geslani**; **Alex**, **Derek**, **Meg** and **Sam** & **Cole Sandoval**; **Chloe**, **Cody** and **Kirby Jalandoni**; her great-granddaughter, **Reese Quintos.**

Her body lies in state at the family residence in Baguio City.
Interment will be on September 22, 2007, Saturday.
We request all relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for her eternal happiness in Heaven.

Beloved Husband
and Father

GLENN B. GOTANCO

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on September 13, 2007 at the age of 45.

His wife **Maribel** and children **Arabel**, **Mayen**, **Gillian**, **Craig** and **Warren**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on September 18, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque at 9:30 a.m. after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

PETRONILA LIMUN EVANGELISTA

Joined her Creator on September 14, 2007 at age 77.

Her bereaved brothers, **DR. LUIS L. EVANGELISTA, ENGR. NEMESTO L. EVANGELISTA** and sister **MS. LYDIA L. EVANGELISTA**, nephews, nieces and grandchildren request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Bahay Carmelo, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish (OLMC), Project 6, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, September 19, at Himlayang Pilipino Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at OLMC Parish Church.

> **"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."**
> 2 Corinthians 5:8

People, Events & Products

Pepsi Cola gearing up for 2nd Mafbex

LEADING BEVERAGE COMPANY PEPSI Cola Products Philippines Inc is gearing up for its participation in the 2nd Manila Foods and Beverages Expo (Mafbex) in a bid to showcase its expanding array of products and services to its ever-growing market and industry partners.

The move was inspired by Pepsi Cola's highly successful stint in the 1st Mafbex last June at the World Trade Center, where hundreds of exhibitors from 17 countries in North America, Eastern and Western Europe, Australia, and Northeast and Southeast Asia participated.

The show was also highlighted by beautiful country pavilions of Australia, Asia, China, Europe, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the United States, all exhibiting the best and finest in foods, beverages, and related wares.

"Having participated in Mafbex gave us an opportunity to showcase the full host of carbonated softdrinks (Pepsi, 7Up, Mountain Dew, and Mug Rootbeer) and non-carbonated products (Lipton Ice Tea, Gatorade, and Tropicana) our company has-not to mention the services we offer our trade partners in terms of deliveries, machine deployment, and machine repairs," said Pepsi Cola trade marketing manager Gian Enriquez.

"We've been able to open new accounts and accommodate inquiries of potential accounts," Enriquez added.

Pepsi Cola was among the many local and foreign firms that were swarmed by some 36,000 visitors during the event's five-day run.

"Relatively, about 96 percent of the total Mafbex spectators came to check our booth since we were strategically located at the entrance of the World Trade Center. Well, aside from the merchandising advantage that we got from joining Mafbex, we were able to meet people in the industry who share the same interest and aspiration for their companies," Enriquez pointed out.

Organized by Worldbex in cooperation with College of St. Benilde-School of Hotel & Restaurant Institution Management, Mafbex is supported by industry players and trade associations such as the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Filipino International Franchise Association, Food Caterers Association of the Philippines, Food Entrepreneurs & Exporters of the Philippines Inc, Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines, Hotel & Restaurant Chefs Association of the Philippines, Organization of Bar Professionals, Philippine Association of Landscape Architects, Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc, Philippine Food Processors & Exporters Organization, and the United Coconut Planters Association of the Philippines.

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QUISUMBING TORRES LAWYER SPEAKS IN BUSINESS FORUM

Business Leaders Forum

Lawyer Laurence B. Arroyo, partner of the Litigation Practice Group of Quisumbing Torres (QT), delivered a presentation on 'Arbitration in the Philippines: Wave of the Future?' at the Philippine Business Leaders Forum held in Cameron Forbes Room, Manila Polo Club. In his keynote address, Arroyo opened the forum by discussing the state of the judiciary and the various reforms undertaken to address the problems bedeviling the courts. He then gave a brief history of arbitration in the Philippines, including the salient features of Republic Act No. 9285, the 'Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2004'. An open forum followed right after the presentation. The forum was attended by 25 guests, most of whom are members of the Philippine Business Forum Inc. The delegates also included Quisumbing Torres' lawyers Leo G. Dominguez, partner of the corporate commercial practice group and head of the mining and natural resources practice group, and Ramon J. Quisumbing, partner of the litigation practice group. Shown are Quisumbing Torres litigation partner Laurence B. Arroyo (center), QT litigation practice group head Ramon J. Quisumbing (left) and QT corporate commercial partner and mining and natural resources practice group head Leo G. Dominguez.

MOLDEX SEALS PARTNERSHIP

CONTRACT SIGNING

The Moldex Group of Companies (MGOC) recently awarded the bored piling works of its latest project The Grand Towers to Advanced Foundation Construction System Corp (AFCSC). Present during the contract signing are (from left), executive vice president of Moldex Land Inc Augusto S. Refran, MGOC president Roy Joseph Z. Vinuya, Moldex Realty Inc president Rey Ignacio M. Diaz, AFCSC president engineer Ettore Rossi, AFCSC VP for operations engineer Joel Arceo, and MGOC executive vice president Jose Angiolo C. Ledesma.

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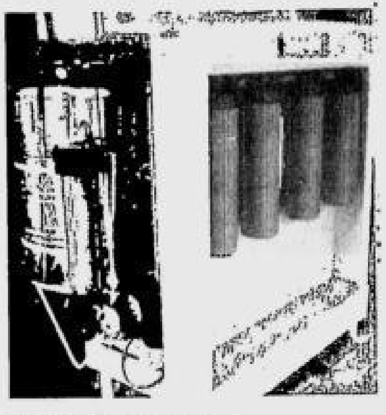

THE ELECTROMEX UHP 500 WATER refilling station is a high-tech filtration system which undergoes full-time, heavy-duty ozone generation, microfiltration and ultraviolet sterilization. This process works even with deep well systems, except for wells with salt water concentrates and oil contamination.

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The UHP 500 costs only 30 centavos per gallon, and has a capacity of 5 gallons a minute, or 3,000 gallons per 10-hour period, producing pure mineral, non-acidic (alkaline base) clean water.

The UHP 500 is perfect for small businesses, and for individuals who wish to start their own business right in their own homes.

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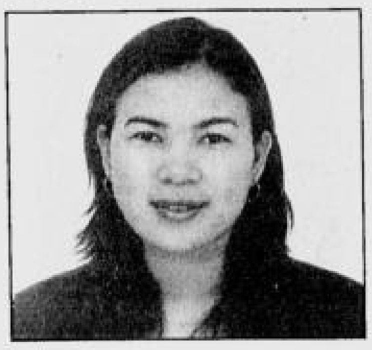

CHERRYLYN C. ADORNA whose picture appears above, has a standing **Warrant of Arrest** issued by the Regional Trial Court of Makati City, Branch 146 in Criminal Case No. 07-1080 entitled "People of the Philippines vs. Cherrylyn C. Adorna" for Estafa. She is presently at **large**.

If you have any information on her whereabouts which could lead to the service of the warrant of arrest against her, please contact MS. SUSANA C. MEJIA at the **HDM Financing Corp.** at No. 2067-C, Hawaii St., La Paz, Makati City, Tel. No. 8901858.

(PDI – September 17, 2007)

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'Sari-sari' stores get shot in the arm

By Daxim L. Lucas

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MICROVENTURES hopes to get more of the country's top manufacturers to join the program.

HAPINOY STORE
MARIEL STORE

THE GRAND plan is to have 100,000 Hapinoy Stores set up across the Philippines in two years.

THE COUNTRY'S informal neighborhood store industry has been on a steady decline in recent years.

In urban areas, in particular, the so-called *sari-sari* stores have slowly been giving way to chains of gleaming 24-hour convenience stores.

Recently, however, a group that seeks to leverage the power of microfinancing has sought to inject new life into this industry that has long been, for better or for worse, the icon of Filipino entrepreneurial drive.

Enter Mircoventures Inc.—a self-described social business enterprise—and its first "microventure," the Hapinoy project, is meant to increase the sales and profits of microentrepreneur *sari-sari* store owners.

Hapinoy Stores are branded *sari-sari* stores owned and run by microentrepreneurs and built on the backbone of the microfinance industry. Supported by the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Hapinoy is a nationwide initiative involving multiple microfinancing institutions in different areas of the country.

"What we're doing is linking microfinance institutions with the business world so that we could empower economically and socially challenged Filipinos," said Microventures chair Rafael Lopa.

He explained that the institution is an offshoot of the advocacy of former President Corazon Aquino who has long been a supporter of microfinance as a way of alleviating poverty among the country's poor.

Currently, a pilot program is ongoing in southern Luzon and is targeting 8,000 Hapinoy Stores owned by "microborrowers" of the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Inc. (CARD), the largest microfinancing institution in the Philippines, by yearend.

CARD is a logical jump-off point for the project, especially since the microfinance institution already has 390,000 borrowers, a significant number of whom are engaged in the sari-sari store business.

"Microventures initiated the Hapinoy project in an effort to empower *sari-sari* stores by linking them directly to partner product manufacturers, through capacity-building and through the community support generated by the network," said its president Paolo Benigno A. Aquino IV.

"As a result, Hapinoy *sari-sari* store owners are able to get higher margins on their goods sold, save on new efficiency measures and have the opportunity to get into new businesses that can increase their earning potential," he added.

In practice, Hapinoy Stores pool all their supply requirements into bulk purchases from manufacturers and suppliers. Because of this, Hapinoy Store operators are able to make more profit and sharing this with Microventures, as well.

"What we're hoping to create is a sustainable business model, and not just one which will create donor fatigue," Lopa said. "We really have an antidole out mind-set."

According to the group's managing director, Mark Joaquin Ruiz, the project also aims to widen the country's middle class, by targeting their efforts toward the least-privileged members of society—hopefully transforming the social distribution picture from the current triangle-shaped diagram to a diamond-shaped figure with a wide and stable midsection—all through empowering the poorest of the poor to help themselves.

Microventures further described the project as an initiative which "aims to further develop the entrepreneurial spirit in our fellow Filipinos."

"The project advances the spirit of entrepreneurship where it is needed the most," Aquino said. "Through Hapinoy, the aim is to help our fellow countrymen by guiding them in improving their current business and giving them the opportunity to get into further businesses."

By banding together, store owners can bargain for lower prices

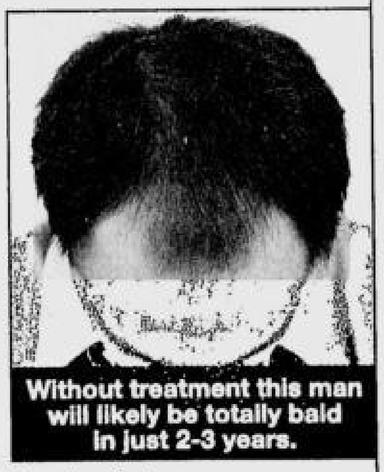
Since its launch, some 1,000 *sari-sari* stores, mostly in southern Luzon, have been transformed into Hapinoy Stores. Microventures officials said that the group's eventual aim is to have 100,000 Hapinoy Stores across the archipelago in two years.

"Our goal is to help each microentreprenuer, to help each of our *nanays* (mothers), improve their lives and their livelihood through this endeavor," Aquino added. "We hope that by being a part of the Hapinoy community, our *nanays* will be given new opportunities for themselves and for their families."

GOING BALD?
Don't wait another 15 minutes and another hair.

The rate of a man's hairloss can average about 35,000 hairs a year on a baldness-prone head. That means, when receding and thinning are at their peak, you're losing 1 hair approximately every 15 minutes!

As most men prior to hairloss have a total scalp cover of 100,000 to 150,000 hairs or more, a mere 4 disappearing every hour go unnoticed - until it's too late. It just takes 3-5 years to go bald - often faster.



Without treatment this man will likely be totally bald in just 2-3 years.

But why do so many men let themselves go bald while there's still time to seek professional help?

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System densities are now the main driver of data center space requirements. Newer high-density systems may have smaller footprints than the systems they replace, but they require more support in terms of power protection and cooling. For example, new blade server packages are further condensing the computing package, creating higher density racks. This increases power and cooling system support and requirements. High-density systems may generate more heat than the systems around them that they create "hot spots" in the data center, where temperatures directly above the equipment are hotter than the rest of the room.

As a result, data center managers face several challenges in fulfilling these goals. One of these challenges is the pressure on IT infrastructure to keep up and maintain high availability and continuity

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Tourist arrivals peak in Bicol

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—IN THE FIRST SIX months this year, the number of tourists who came to visit Bicol rose by 37 percent compared to last year's record in the same period, according to latest statistics from the Department of Tourism (DOT) regional office.

Translated into earnings, these tourists in the period from January to June turned over P255 million in gross receipts.

Camarines Sur, including the chartered Naga City, got the biggest share of the pie with P103 million from a total of 211,180 tourists who visited the province.

DOT's statistics showed a consistent increase in foreign tourists visiting Camarines Sur since the full operation of the Camsur Watersports Complex (CWC) in 2005.

This year, from January to June, the number of foreign tourists dramatically increased to 19,224 from 9,969 during the same period last year.

Albay province, formerly the top gross earner, only contributed 16-percent growth from last year's record of 81,049 to 94,348 tourist arrivals this year for the same period.

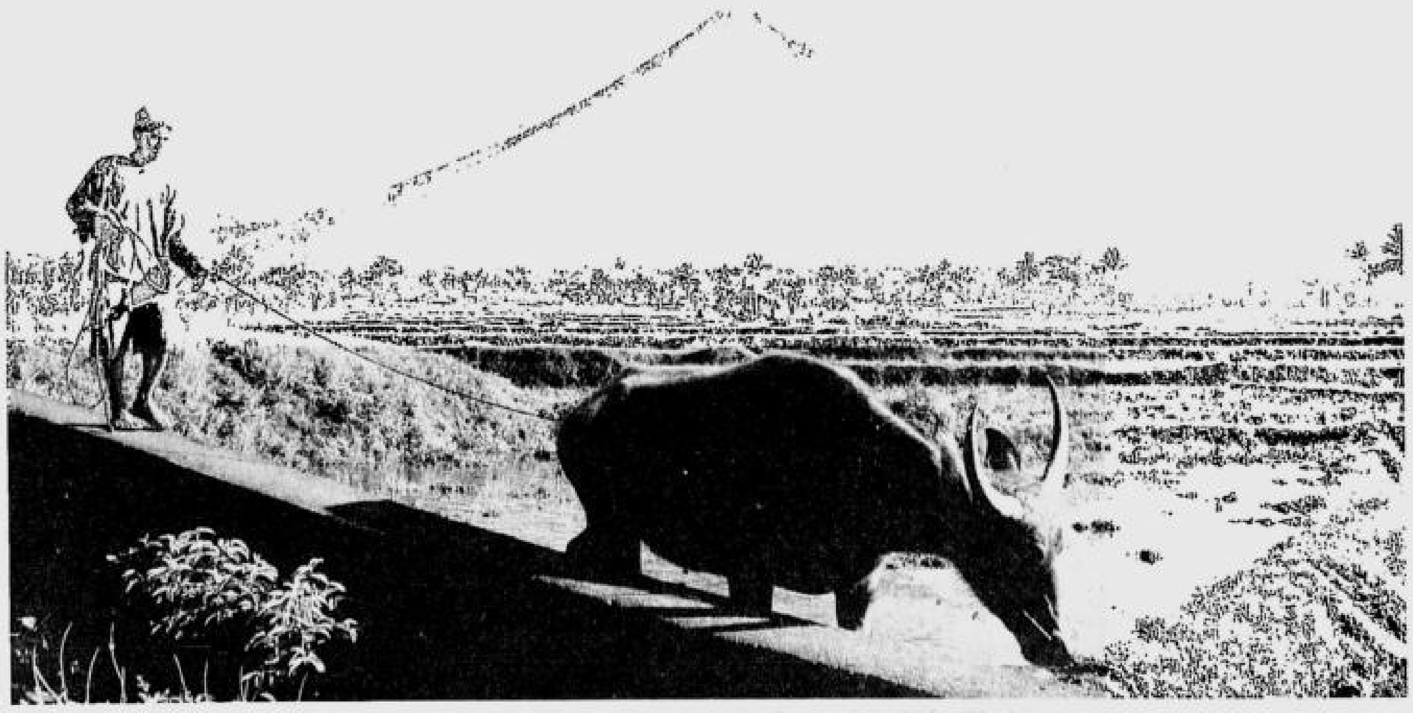
But Albay surpassed by 1,227 individuals the record of Camarines Sur's foreign arrivals of 20,451 individuals during the same period.

Catanduanes made a remarkable improvement in tourist arrivals, posting a 61.5-percent increase with 23,504 tourists paying a visit.

The DOT attributed the increase to the growing popularity of Catanduanes' fine beaches and surfing spots, which were made accessible with the introduction of air-conditioned modern ferry services that link the province to mainland Bicol through the Albay-Catanduanes route.

Masbate also did well, with 50,753 tourists visiting the province in the first half of the year compared to 37,319 tourists recorded during the same period last year.

But the provinces of Sorsogon and Camarines Norte were the losers in terms of number of tourist arrivals. Sorsogon suffered an 18-percent decline in tourist arrivals compared to last year's record of 38,054 tourists who visited the province to the present record of 31,190 tourists.


ALBAY, home of the 2,474-meter Mayon Volcano, is still a favorite among foreign tourists visiting Bicol. NIÑO JESUS Y. ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

The DOT report showed a decline in arrivals for Sorsogon despite its world renowned whale shark interaction in the towns of Pilar and Donsol.

The province was hounded by red tide occurrence, eruptions and the volatile peace and order situation due to the armed conflict between the government and communist rebels and reports on extrajudicial killings.

Meanwhile, Camarines Norte's tourist arrivals declined by 6 percent, from 39,085 in 2006 to 38,695 tourists in the first six-month period of this year.

Poverty alleviation through taxation

(First of two parts)

MAPPING THE FUTURE
Tammy H. Lipana

IN HER SEVENTH SONA, PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo promised crucial reforms to hike revenues, reduce the budget deficit and tame inflation.

With more foreign investments expected in the next 20 years, President Macapagal-Arroyo hopes that by then, "poverty shall have been marginalized and the marginalized raised to a robust middle-class."

How is poverty defined

Republic Act 8425 known as the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act defines the poor as individuals and families whose income fall below the poverty threshold as defined by the government, and who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their basic needs of food, health, education, housing and other amenities of life. The National Statistical Coordination Board states that: "For 2007, Filipino families consisting of five members should be earning a combined monthly income of P6,195 in order to meet their most basic food and nonfood needs for this year. A sole breadwinner in a five-member family residing at the National Capital Region is expected to find a difficult task in bringing the entire family above the poverty line if he/she only earns at most P 265 per day."

Ways to alleviate poverty

There are many ways by which the government can alleviate poverty. One of them is through taxation.

From a layman's point of view, taxation is an act of government to get from those who have, to sustain its operations and to benefit those who do not have.

In short, it is resource allocation.

This resource allocation comes in two forms, namely: Outright tax exemption or preferential tax rate and revenue allocation.

Outright tax exemption means that the government is not collecting any tax, while preferential tax rate means that the government is imposing a reduced tax rate.

For example, individuals in the lower-income brackets are either income tax exempt or subject to lower tax rates of 5, 10 or 15 percent, versus those with high income who are taxed at 32 percent.

Thus, a family man with four qualified dependent children and earning the minimum wage of P362 a day, or an average of P9,000 a month, will pay not more than P4,350 a year.

Overseas Filipino workers are also tax exempt on their foreign-sourced income.

Small businesses or those with gross sales or receipts from businesses not exceeding P1.5 million in any 12-month period are not subject to the 12 percent VAT.

Instead, they are taxed at the rate of 3 percent of their gross quarterly sales or receipts.

As we go about our daily life, we must provide for our basic needs of food, shelter, health care and education.

To reduce the cost of basic needs and hopefully make them affordable to the poor, our tax laws provide for certain tax exemptions as follows:

Food-related

The National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) grants VAT exemption to some transactions relating to the importation, sale or production of food items, such as: Agricultural and marine food products in their original state; livestock and poultry-producing foods for human consumption—thus, fish, vegetables, meat and fruits we buy from the market are exempt from VAT; fertilizers; seeds, seedlings and fingerlings; fish, prawn, livestock and poultry feeds; services by agricultural contract growers and milling of *palay*, corn and sugar cane; and sales by agricultural cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority.

Housing is being made affordable also through VAT exemption.

For example, lease of a residential unit with monthly rental not exceeding P10,000 is exempt from VAT. The same is true with the sale of house and lot not exceeding P2.5 million.

Health care

To reduce the cost of health care, the law exempts from VAT medical, dental, hospital, and veterinary services except those rendered by professionals.

Educational Services. Likewise, the cost of education is being supported by exempting from VAT educational services of duly accredited private educational institutions, and the sale, importation, printing or publication of books.

Income tax relief of schools and hospitals. In addition to being VAT exempt, nonstock and nonprofit private educational institutions and government educational institutions are exempt from corporate income tax, while proprietary or profit-oriented educational institutions are taxed only at 10 percent (as against the regular 35 percent rate) of taxable income from direct school operations, provided income from unrelated activities does not exceed 50 percent of total gross income.

Similarly, nonprofit private hospitals are taxed at 10 percent.

Tax relief to BMBEs

The government encourages the formation and growth of Barangay Micro Business Enterprises or BMBEs to serve as seedbeds of Filipino entrepreneurial talents and generate employment and help the poor at the barangay level.

Under the enabling law, Republic Act 9278, BMBEs are exempt from income tax on income from operations.

To reduce the cost of BMBE borrowings from accredited financial institutions, interest, commissions and discounts on loans earned by said institutions are exempt from the gross receipts tax.

Revenue allocation

Another mechanism to help the poor is through budget or revenue allocation.

At the National Level. Tax revenue is the main source of government income. At least 60 percent of tax collected accrues to the National Treasury and is made available for general expenditures.

The revenue is allotted to various government departments and agencies taking into account their operational and project requirements.

This allotment goes through a tedious budgetary process before it can be disbursed.

As part of the administration's commitment to alleviate poverty, Malacañang recently proposed a 60-percent budget increase for pro-poor programs and projects for fiscal year 2008, or a total of P166.8 billion compared to P104.5 billion for this year.

Allocation to LGUs. At the local levels, revenue allocation comes in the form of: Internal revenue allotment (IRA), share of LGUs in nation's wealth, share of LGUs in the proceeds of the reformed VAT law, and share in 5 percent Gross Income Tax or (GIT) under the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) Law.

Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). At least 30 percent of internal revenue collections, known as IRA, are allocated to the LGUs throughout the country as provided for in the NIRC and the Local Government Code.

Provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays share in the IRA based on area, population and equal sharing up to a certain percentage.

LGU share

LGUs also have a 40-percent share in the national government's collection from excise taxes on mineral products, royalties, and such other taxes, fees or charges, and from its share in any coproduction, joint venture or production sharing agreement in the utilization and development of the national wealth within their territorial jurisdiction.

In May 2005, the government adopted a fiscal reform program which included increasing the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent and the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

If you may recall, this was a project of former Senator Ralph Recto and some people say that this is one reason why he lost in the recent election.

The good news is that the LGUs' share in the incremental VAT collections and 50 percent thereof are earmarked for construction of school buildings, health insurance, environmental conservation and agricultural modernization.

The Peza Law also provides that 2- to 5-percent tax on gross income earned by all business enterprises within the economic zones shall be directly remitted to the treasurer's office of the municipality or city where the enterprises are located.

Innovations in tax administration and collection.

To further increase tax collection, the BIR and the Bureau of Customs continue to innovate by using the latest technology and marketing techniques.

Computerization

Foremost of the initiatives is the Tax Computerization Program started in 1994.

The core of the Computerization Program is an integrated tax system with a standard processing framework designed to increase revenue collections, improve taxpayer service, promote better taxpayer compliance, and improve operational efficiency and transparency.

The Integrated Tax System is a set of related systems and processes that provides maximum automation and minimum manual intervention in BIR operations.

With 14 application systems in place, it allows the Bureau to approach all of its information and major business functions in a consolidated manner.

The Relief or the Reconciliation for Listing and Enforcement Program or the "no contact audit approach" works by matching the data on sales provided by suppliers with the data on purchases provided by buyers.

This matching technique discloses large discrepancies in sales and purchases which provided the BIR a basis to assess and collect substantial deficiency income tax and value-added tax from many taxpayers.

Starting in 2001, the Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS) has been in place consistent with the requirements of the "Electronic Commerce Act."

Large and nonlarge taxpayers have availed themselves of the electronic filing and payment system, thereby promoting more efficient tax collection.

Also, staggered filing of certain monthly tax returns based on five industry classifications have helped facilitate tax collection.

(To be continued)

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is chair and senior partner of Isla Lipana & Co./PricewaterhouseCoopers. This article is an excerpt of a paper she delivered on August 30, 2007 at the Inaugural Grand Academic Conference of Adamson University on the theme "Harnessing Advances in Science and Technology for Poverty Reduction." Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

GOINGS-ON

Juan new LCF president

CHIT U. JUAN of Figaro Foundation has been elected president of the League of Corporate Foundations, taking over from Malu Erni of Petron Foundation who is now chair of the 73-member organization composed of the country's top corporate foundations.

Other members of the board of trustees are Col. Alex Escaño of MFI Foundation, Sonny Carpio of Aboitiz Foundation, Kenneth Hartigan-Go of Zuellig Foundation, Linda Atayde of SM Foundation, Marivic Sarmiento of Sarmiento Foundation and Elaine Go-Mapa of EYE Foundation.

Perfume-making seminar set

THE GOLDEN TREASURE Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on perfume-making at the Vermont Blooms Unlimited at 9 Anonas Rd., Proj., 3, Quezon City on Sept. 23, Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and costing. Participants will undergo hands-on training on making perfume spray, cologne spray, roll-on perfume, cream type perfume and gel solid type perfume.

For questions, call 952-68-37, 913-65-51, 436-78-26 and 421-15-77.

Stalla partners with La Salle

THE STALLA Review Program, a top global chartered financial analyst (CFA) review program provider, has partnered with the De La Salle Professional Schools to deliver affordable and quality CFA review programs to interested participants.

The partnership is designed to maximize the learning experience of Philippine candidates. For the December 2007 exam level 1, the program started last Sept. 8 and will end in November.

A CFA designation is recognized globally as the gold standard for investment professionals.

For more information, visit www.fundmetrics.com or call De La Salle Professional Schools at 753-4611 to 14 local 102.

Robinsons goes direct clearing

ROBINSONS BANK, JG Summit Holdings Inc.'s financial services arm, was recently accorded direct clearing participation by the Philippine Clearing House Corp. (PCHC).

In a statement, RSBank said the migration was mainly due to its continuous expansion in business operations resulting in rapid growth.

For inquiries on RSBank's products and services, customers may contact the bank's call center at 631-8888 or 702-9500, email Call.center@robinsonsbank.com.ph or log on to www.robinsonsbank.com.ph or visit any RSBank branches nationwide.

Holcim on Dow Jones index

HOLCIM has once again been named "Leader of the Industry" in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index.

Holcim has been included in both the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and the Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Index for five years.

The recognition demonstrates that Holcim meets the high expectations placed on global corporations. The achievement is based on a further strengthening of the commitment toward sustainable development.

DOT steps up Japan campaign

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism has assembled a 65-man delegation for the Sept. 14-16 World Tourism Congress and Travel Fair in Tokyo Big Sight.

The fair, organized by Japan Association of Travel Agents, is now Japan's sole travel industry exhibition and major tourism marketplace catering to the 17.4-million Japanese outbound market.

For eco advocates ...

From page B2-4

Thus, cutting demand for lighting electricity would greatly free up capacity for industries and businesses.

In the Philippines, a household that switches to an 18-watt Philips energy saving CFL from an ordinary 100-watt incandescent lamp can save up to P4,686 in just one and half years, he explained.

This is based on a 12-hour usage for P9.50 per kWh.

As for consumer cost, energy efficient lighting costs less to operate and maintain, said Shiang Ning.

CFLs are 80 percent more energy efficient while providing the same light levels as regular incandescent bulbs, he explained.

CFLs also last six to 10 times longer and emit only a fraction of the heat of incandescents.

Shiang Ning said they expect to have 5,000 incandescent lamps switched with energy savers by the end of their campaign and exhibit at the Edsa Shangri-La Mall.

This would translate to about P27 million in energy savings.

"Imagine if more Filipinos make the switch," he said. "The energy savings can be used to fund other more pressing government matters such as improving education and healthcare in the country."

As a global leader in lighting solutions, Philips aims to lead an advocacy promoting energy management, Shiang Ning said.

He explained that, in the past five years, Philips has invested more than 400 million euros or about $552 million in research and development of energy efficient lighting solutions.

This, he said, has resulted in attractive new technologies and possibilities for the industry.

Aside from the Philips energy savers, the company has made available this year new halogen bulbs that can provide 50-percent savings compared to traditional household bulbs.

Philips is also set to introduce light emitting diodes (LEDs), which use only an eighth of the power of regular light bulbs and even less than half that of CFLs.

These LEDs can also last up to 50,000 hours.

"With these forthcoming product introductions, saving energy will be much easier," he said.

SEN. MAR Roxas checks out one of the vessels of MetroStar Ferry Inc. during the inauguration of the ferry terminal in SM BayCentral. MFI is a wholly owned Filipino company, which was incorporated in 2000 to service the commuter needs of the towns and provinces surrounding Manila Bay.

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A MOTHER **and son view the photo exhibit of Global Warming Agenda with energy conservation campaign at Edsa Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City.**

RUDY ESPERAS

For eco advocates, light at the end of the tunnel

In cutting energy spent on lighting by 40%, 555 million tons of CO_2 will be kept from the atmosphere

By Amy R. Remo

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT can be as easy as changing a light bulb.

That is, replacing incandescent bulbs with energy saving lamps can help save the world from global warming, according to Philips Electronics and Lighting Inc.

"It might seem trivial to some people, but the reality is that switching from incandescent to compact fluorescent translates not only to considerable peso savings, but also to a more sustainable future for everyone," said Wee Shiang Ning, general manager of Philips Lighting Philippines.

Conserving energy and saving the environment, he said, does not have to be a Herculean task.

Thus, through "Wardens of the World," Philips and the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines have sought to engage the public in "simple" energy-conserving solutions to global warming.

The four-day energy management event, which kicked off on Thursday, also aims to educate the public on the benefits of energy efficient lighting and other practices to help address critical environment challenges.

"Our goal is to create acceptance that indeed, global warming and climate change is happening, and to ultimately encourage every Filipino, community and government to take action," Shiang Ning said.

Countries all over the world have begun feeling the devastating impact of global warming through floods, droughts and the melting of glaciers.

In particular, the Philippines is extremely vulnerable to climate change, which can cause food and fresh water shortages, receding coastlines, drought, among others.

In his speech, Shiang Ning explained that globally, lighting accounts for 19 percent of electricity consumption.

Meanwhile, 75 percent of the world's lights utilize older, inefficient technology such as incandescent lighting.

"By year 2030, we would be consuming 80 percent more energy if we continue with our current practices," Shiang Ning said.

"The required action is very simple: Eliminate inefficient and costly incandescent lighting today by switching to Philips' energy efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)," he added.

In terms of environmental costs, Shiang Ning said that easing energy consumption on lighting could consequently reduce carbon dioxide emissions resulting from burning fossil fuels for electricity generation.

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute largely to global warming.

Meanwhile, energy efficient bulbs also use less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Studies have pointed out that, in trimming energy currently spent on lighting by 40 percent, 555 million tons of carbon dioxide would be kept from being released in the atmosphere.

This translates to savings of up to 1,560 million barrels of oil a year—equivalent to the annual energy output of 530 power stations.

According to Shiang Ning, this can be crucial since global demand for energy is likely to increase by 53 percent from the present until 2030. Over 70 percent of this increase will come from developing countries, led by China and India.

FOR ECO/ B2-3

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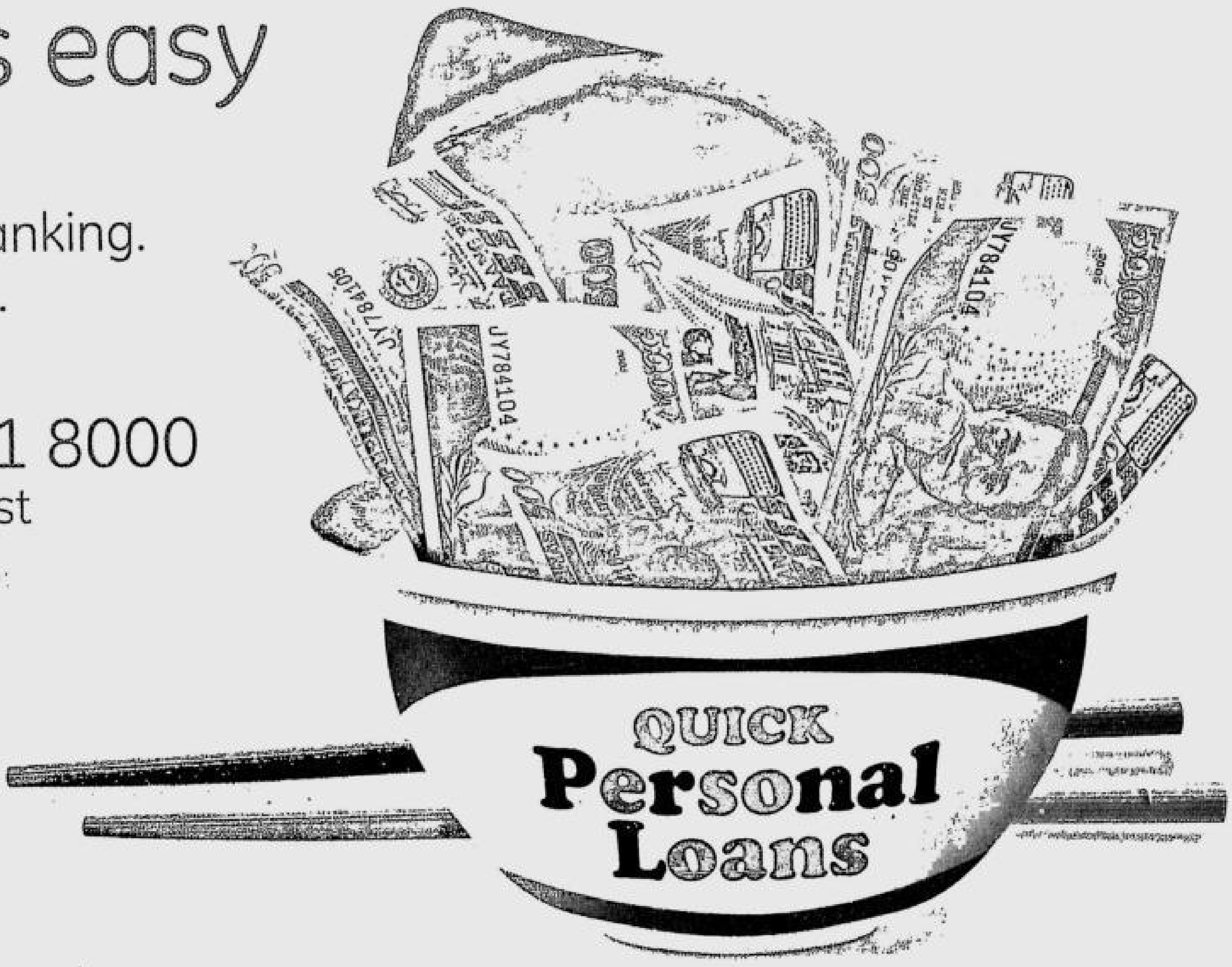

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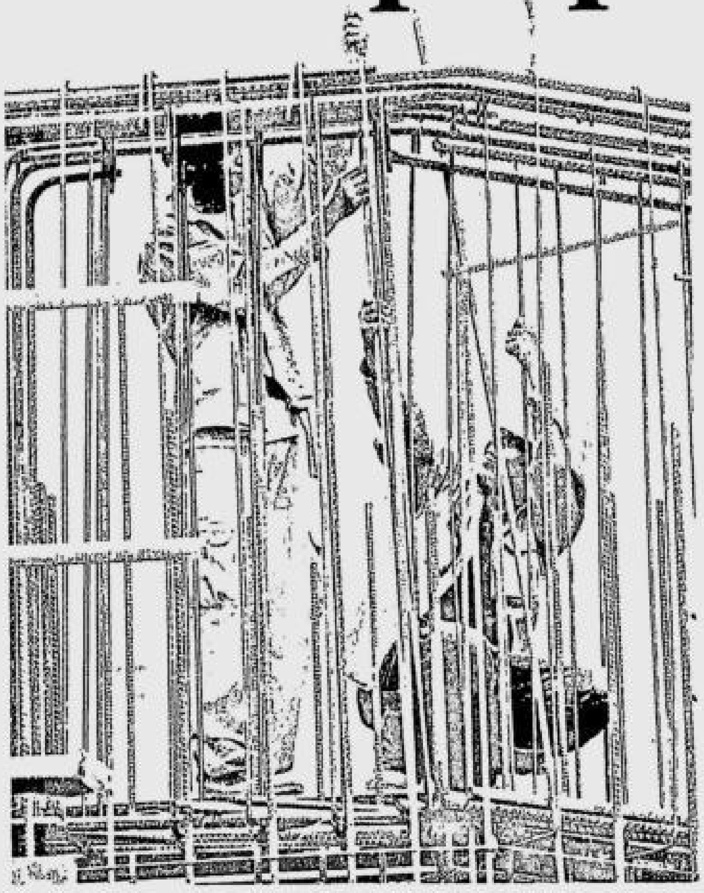
Hot property sector shows no sign of cooling down



LABORERS fix metal bars at a construction site. Other countries may be reeling from US subprime woes, but not the Philippines. AFP

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

HAS THE PHILIPPINE PROPerty sector lost its sizzle as financial markets cool down after the subprime mortgage fright in the United States?

In 2005, property companies and analysts lauded the start of a property boom—which had been long anticipated since 1997—largely due to a growing outsourcing industry that has spurred demand for office spaces, very low interest rates on housing loans, and an increasing appetite for homes from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

Overstated fears

Two years later, industry analysts still believe that property investments are still a hot item, as reflected by resilient local and even overseas demand even if subprime mortgages have tightened credit access in the US, considered a relatively important market for home buyers of Philippine properties.

Market fears of a loss of a major growth driver in terms of residential sales from OFWs are, by far, also overstated, analysts said.

Subprime mortgages are mortgages granted to a borrower with a less-than-perfect credit report or those who have either missed or have been late in payments on a debt. The lure of subprime loans is that it does not require collateral.

Concerns about the massive housing and mortgage markets have swept the globe in

HOT PROPERTY/ B3-2

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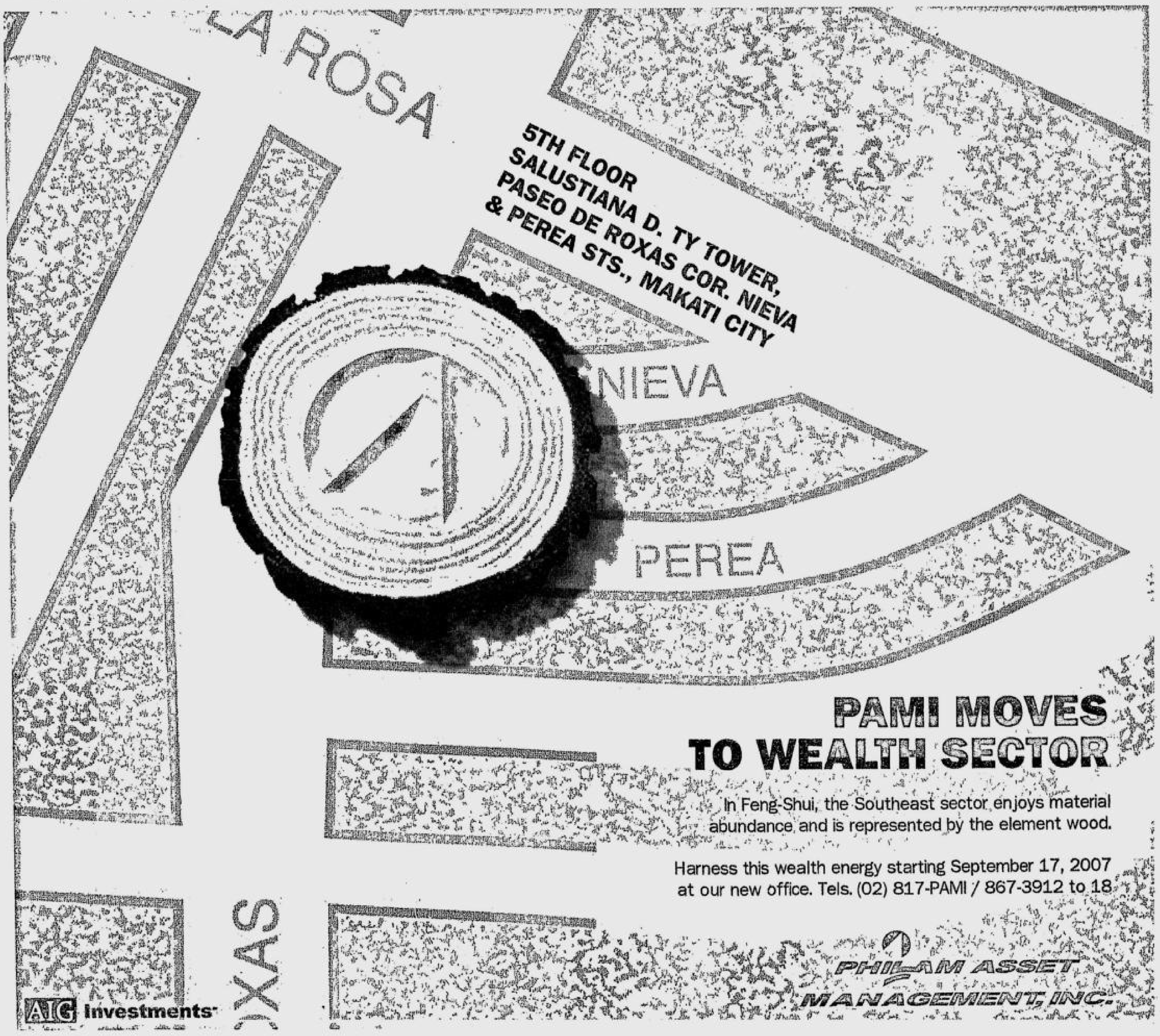

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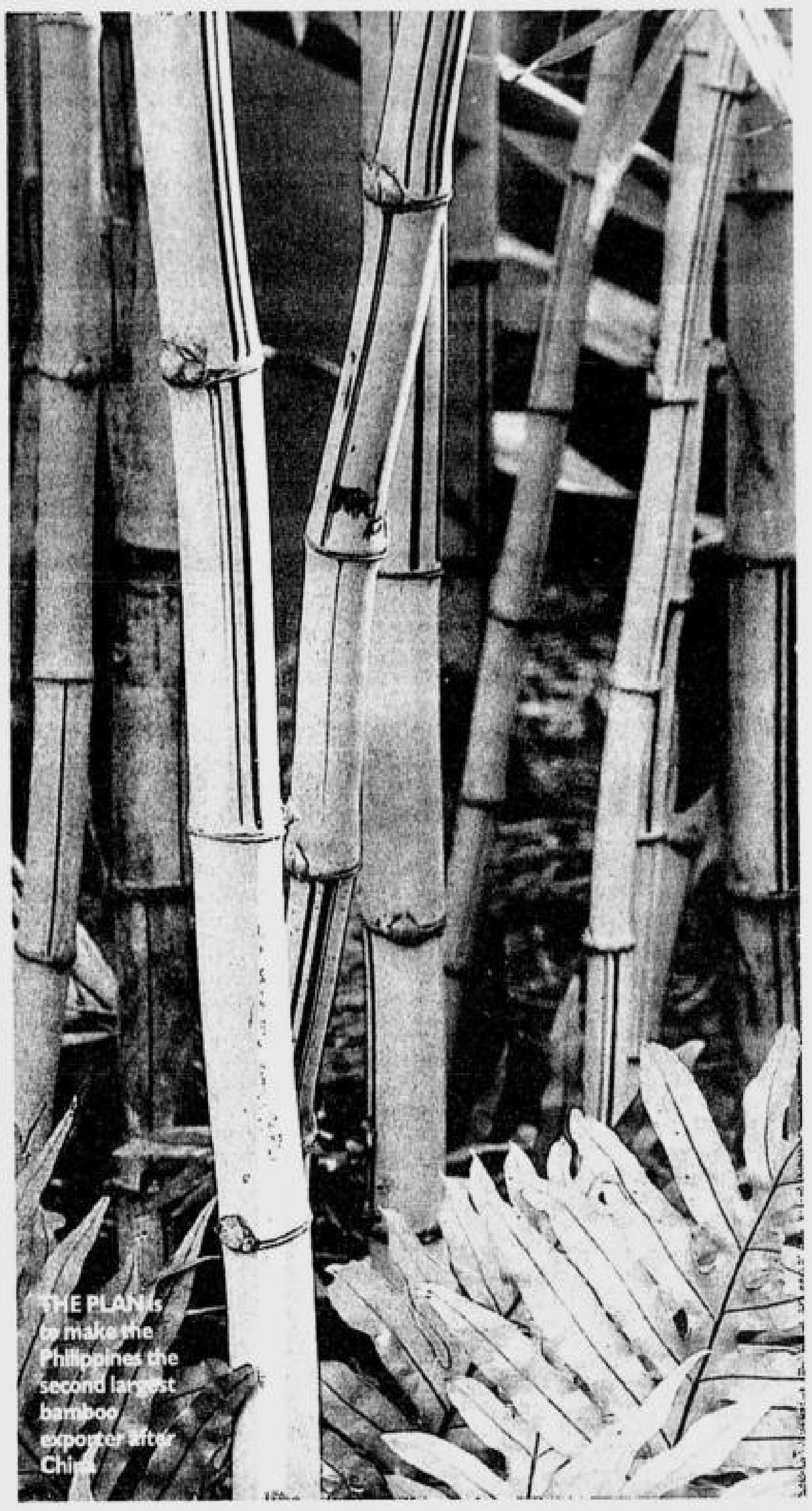

THE PLAN is to make the Philippines the second largest bamboo exporter after China.

Bamboo considered RP's next wonder plant

Private firms lead campaign to make better use of abundant grass

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The dollar-earning potential of locally raised bamboo has encouraged private firms to find ways to make the country's bamboo industry graduate from conservative to aggressive.

The Philippine Bamboo Foundation (PBF) said there were 52,000 hectares of bamboo land in the country today, but the area just could not cope with the increasing global demand for finished bamboo products.

Of course, the country enjoys many toothpicks and barbecue sticks out of its bamboo.

Ambitious plan

But Undersecretary Edgardo Manda, presidential assistant for Southern Tagalog, said more can be done with bamboo.

"It's because the bamboo is the most available and abundant resource in the countryside," Manda told provincial officials at the Benguet State University here recently.

"The plan is ambitious. We will make the Philippines climb to second spot in the global ladder of bamboo exporters," said Romualdo Sta. Ana, PBF president.

He said China is the world's No. 1 bamboo exporter while the country is No. 4.

He said the bid to make the country a "bamboo power" would depend on how provinces and towns would respond to proposals to establish bamboo forests in their areas.

Manda admitted that bamboo-raising is not among the priorities of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture.

"The key is a successful private-led initiative backed by government support" he said.

The Rotary Club of Makati Central, Rotary Club of Baguio and Benguet, BSU and the PBF have started talks to put up bamboo forests, nurseries and a bamboo setum for the Cordillera.

A bamboo setum is a master park or nursery that would showcase all kinds of bamboo varieties complete with poles, a lake, fishpond and a research and training center.

Crucial role

Benguet may yet play a crucial role in this endeavor, Manda said. "Benguet is the most suitable place in the Philippines to raise bamboos because of its climate," he said.

The country has many bamboo varieties. In Benguet, the most commonly raised is the "bayog" type, which could grow up to more than 20 feet.

Raised sporadically in Kapangan, Atok and Tublay towns, the "bayog" is sold from P120 to P150 a piece.

But Manda, who is also the Rotary Club Makati Central president, said it is not the raw bamboo but its finished products that matter most.

New products

From its roots to its uppermost part, the bamboo could produce all kinds of products—medicine, beauty products, soaps, furniture, bricks clothing, drinks, panels and even surf boards, he said.

No wonder, he said, China earned around $1 billion in bamboo exports in 2006 alone while the Philippines only gets an average of P3 million a year.

He said the plan is to first inventory existing bamboo plants in the country and raise 33,633 plants per bamboo species.

The plants would be propagated using the latest scientific method, he said, courtesy of the technology by the International Network of Bamboo and Rattan based in Beijing, China, would provide.

He said the bamboo goes beyond its economic wallop.

In a presentation before local officials, Manda said the bamboo is a powerful "carbon dioxide sequestrator."

He said a hectare of bamboo land could sequester 12 tons of carbon dioxide a year, a big boost in the bid against global warming.

The plant could also bind six cubic meters of soil, indicating its erosion control power.

Manda said that bamboo mature in four to five years and raisers could enjoy multiple harvests in 20 years.

Hot property sector ...

From page B3-1

the last few months, prompting sharp falls and jittery Asian and European stock markets and have prodded the Federal Reserve to prepare a policy response to a possible credit deterioration.

Analysts said the effects are hardly felt here, and may be manifested in the decision-making of OFWs toward investments.

"Right now, on the average, half of the inventory (of property firms) is sold abroad to investors in the US, Europe and the Middle East. For Filipinos in the United States who are excessively leveraged and who may have availed of subprime loans, they could have second thoughts in borrowing to buy property in the Philippines," Victor Asuncion, director for global research and consulting at CB Richard Ellis said.

Insulated

Filipinos living in Europe and the Middle East are quite insulated which could tilt marketing initiatives by local property firms toward these markets and other new markets as well for their projects.

The continued entry of professionals—such as nurses, teachers, physical therapists—in the US is also a source of relief for property firms, says Asuncion, since property firms can tap into this growing market for their marketing initiatives.

Limited damage

In a research study, ATR Kim Eng Securities head of research Edgar Bancod said the extent of the damage of subprime loans on local banks and real estate firms is likely to be limited.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said the exposure of Philippine financial institutions to collateralized debt obligations (structured finance product that typically protects a diversified pool of debt assets) is limited to 0.2 percent of total industry assets.

Bancod says this is equivalent to roughly P10 billion or $217 million. Additionally, CDOs held by Philippine banks are made up of only A to triple A rated paper which meant that local banks have zero exposure to subprime assets.

Bancod also said a closer look will show that concerns that subprime woes could hurt real estate earnings is quite overdone.

In the case of Ayala Land, the country's largest property company, Bancod said the impact on sales of the "total" loss of business from Filipinos based in the US will be capped at 4.1 percent mainly because ALI has diversified products and markets.

Manageable risks

ALI corporate spokesperson Alfonso Reyes confirmed this, citing three reasons why the risks are manageable.

"We are still in the process of evaluating the potential impact of the US subprime crisis on our potential overseas sales. However we believe that any effects will be quite manageable for three reasons: first is that while the US is an important market, our overseas sales are very diversified now with strong contributions from Europe, Japan and the Middle-East," Reyes said.

Secondly, he said ALI's product lines have become more diversified in recent years and that a lot of the company's product launches have been in the middle-income and affordable segments whereas its US buyers historically have gravitated toward high-end projects.

Finally, the profiles of ALI's US-based buyers are from those with established professions and of strong credit standing. "In fact most of them pay cash," Reyes said.

Sales to OFWs accounted for 34 percent of ALI's first half residential sales. "Therefore they are a large and important segment which we will continue to focus our marketing efforts on," Reyes added.

Lessons from the past

Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, interest rates have drastically dropped to never before seen levels at a fixed rate of 11 percent on a 25-year housing mortgage and in some cases such as Pag-IBIG loans, to as low as 6 to 7 percent for a P750,000 loan for 25 years.

This is compared with a 16 to 19 percent floating rate for the same term (25 years) during the crisis times (1997).

With such favorable conditions, analysts said long gone were the days that the property market was teeming with speculators or those that buy property and will sell them at higher rates.

"Banks in the Philippines are also very conservative, whereas in the US, they can lend to a buyer without collateral, requiring only interest payments. We learned our lesson in 1997 and the BSP is critical of banks' activities," Asuncion said.

Track record

Aside from this, home buyers are also critical of the property developer's track record and the location of the project.

Proof of this is the rise in prices for prime locations. For instance, office rental rates have grown in the last three years to P1,100 per square meter in Makati, P650 to P700/sq.m. in Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, and P550/sq.m. in Ortigas, Pasig City, Asuncion said.

The latest offering by Eton Properties of the Lucio Tan Group for its residential condominium in Greenbelt sold for P93,000/sq.m. between February to August and grew to P100,000/sq.m. today.

The Ayala Land Residences in Greenbelt also sold for P100,000/sq.m. last year and is today selling at P115,000/sq.m.

Filinvest Land Inc. is also raising condominium prices at its Alabang development by 5 percent starting Sept. 1, Asuncion said.

"It's in specific markets. Buyers are very critical," Asuncion said.

Asuncion also said that demand for business process outsourcing firms have remained resilient, with office spaces pre-leased until 2009.

Bancod also said that, if a US economic slowdown looms, this would put pressure on US companies' revenues which could prod these companies to take advantage of offshore services to lower costs and improve profit margins.

"In this way, the subprime scare (for Philippine properties) may be offset by office sales, which remain buoyant," Bancod said.

Philippine Property Boom: 1997 versus 2007

FACTORS	DRIVERS IN 1997	DRIVERS IN 2007
Bank Lending activity	Mainly oriented at investors' speculative demand	Actual end-user demand
Market demand	Investors, local end-users	Investors, local and foreign end-users (OFW/OF)
Development timing	Speculation on future demand	Strong pre-sales/ leasing take-up during development stage, BTS with prior lease commitment
Financing schemes	Unfavorable at 16% for short to mid term floating rate	Relatively more favorable at 11% fixed long-term; 8-9% floating
Market supply	Limited to Makati and Ortigas CBDs, resulting in inflated prices under strong demand	Emerging business districts provide options

INDICATORS	1997	2007
Inflation (% Average)	5.6	2.7
Gross International Reserve	US$ 8.8 billion	US$ 25.6 billion
Equivalent months of Import	2.0	4.8
Exchange Rate	P39.98	P46.27
External Debt ($ billions)	US$ 43 billion	US$ 53.4
External Debt to GDP	52.2	45.4
TOTAL RESOURCES	**1997**	**2007**
Financial System (P billions)	3,389	6,282
Banking System (P billions)	2,279	5,124
Non-Performing Loans Ratio %	4.7	5.3
Capital Adequacy Ratio (%)	Not available	16.9
BANK LENDING RATE (%)	**1997**	**2007**
High	26.4	8.3
Low	23.9	6.6

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KIDS CAN NOW WEAR THE SHOE brand that is one of the most valued and respected all over the world.

Florsheim USA Kids are now available in the Philippines through its retail outlets located in shopping malls like SM, Rustan's, Robinsons, The Landmark and Gibi House boutiques.

The Florsheim brand was established in 1892 and was traditionally a men's footwear brand. But it has since evolved and eventually produced women's shoes as well.

It launched its children's line in 1998 but its distribution was limited within the US and selected countries.

The shoes can fit infants and kids up to 12 years old.

The first stand-alone boutique of Florsheim USA Kids opened last July at SM North Edsa-The Block. More boutiques are set to open soon in SM Cebu and Ayala's Trinoma in Quezon City.

Ayala ...

From page B3-4

In the last 40 years, WWF has built a niche as a promoter for biodiversity. But over the last few years, WWF has looked at tracking climate change as the way of the future.

"We are now introducing mitigation and adaptation structures. WWF sees it as part of our core business to engage corporations to make sure they create islands of sustainability as opposed to aggravating climate change," said Tan. "We are really protecting life, not only biological but social and economic as well."

Initially, Tan said that WWF will participate in the planning stage and identify the "risk parts" for sustainability, not just on the impact on the land, but also the sustainable development of all systems such as energy and water.

This means retro-fitting more efficient design and buildings, hiring staff from the community; prioritizing sustainable energy sources such as getting power from Makban geothermal, and recycling the ground water used.

"WWF will bring energy and water experts, tropical and architectural material life cycle experts. The challenge is how to incorporate these, and in the long run use less electricity, less power. This is a more cost effective way of development," said Bengzon. "We hope that the people who will live here will also show the same concern for the environment."

Ayala said: "It's not just about the hardware, but also the software, and the mechanisms that ensure that all our stakeholders are involved in this."

INFOTECH

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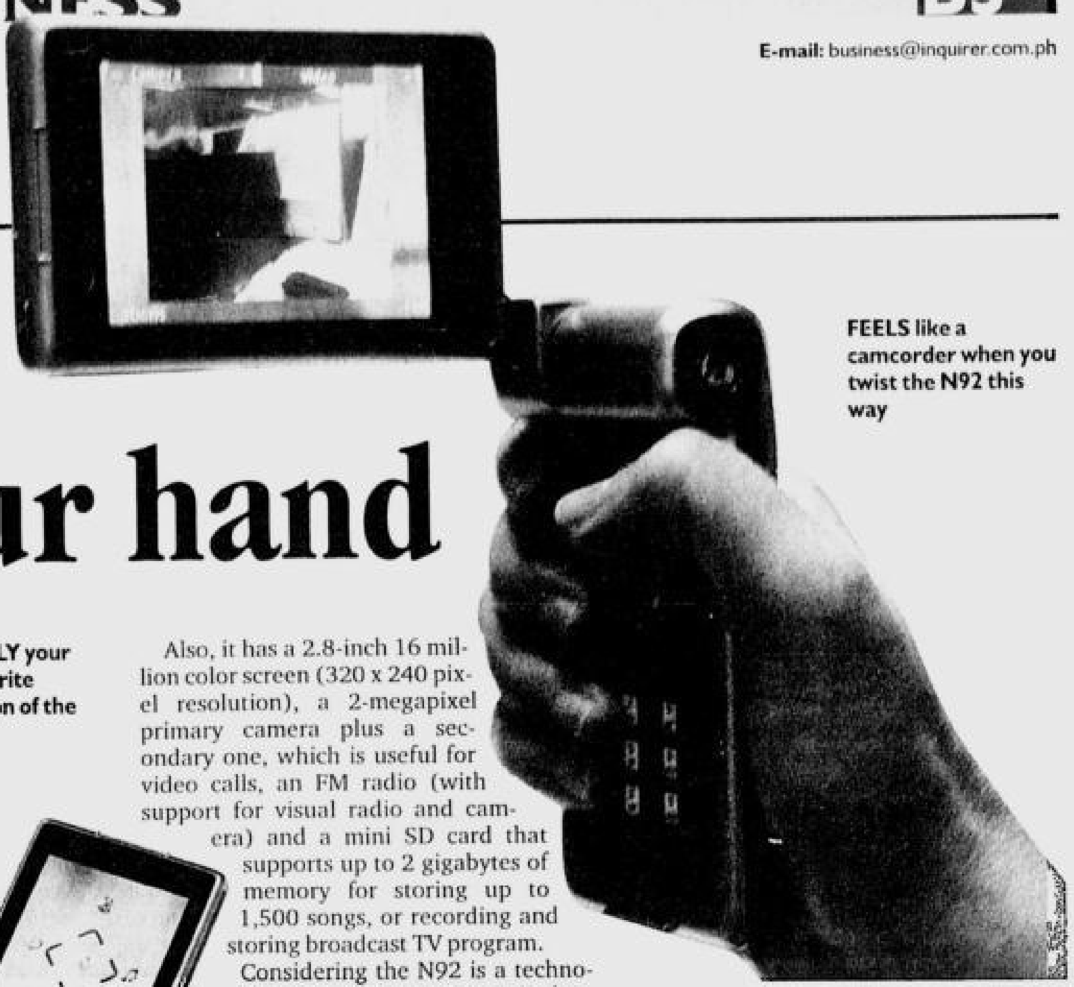
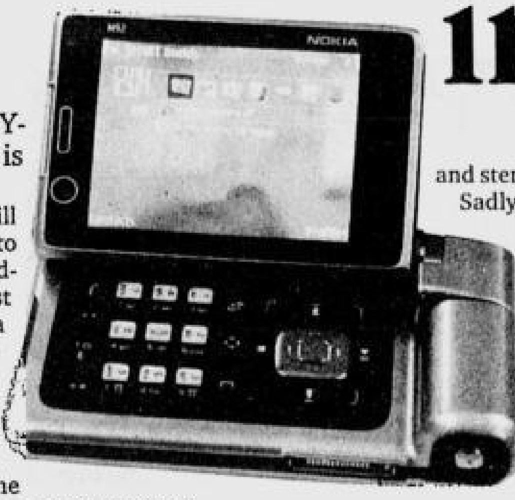
Mobile TV in your hand



FEELS like a camcorder when you twist the N92 this way

Text and photos
by Charles E. Buban



PROBABLY your most favorite orientation of the N92

THERE'S NO DENYING that the N92 is one hefty device.

However, anyone will be more than willing to dismiss this fact in consideration of what this latest Nokia N Series has: a built-in digital video broadcast-handheld (DVB-H) tuner.

Having the DVB-H makes the N92 the only cell phone model at the moment that could receive television signal coming from a broadcast service provider (in the Philippines, 360 Media has given Smart Communications exclusive rights to use its entertainment service package called myTV).

The ability to watch TV programs on a DVB-H-equipped cell phone should be differentiated from that which utilize high-speed 3G networks, wherein the video feeds take a toll on the cell phone's battery life, not to mention its potential to strain the capacity of the cellular service provider if widely used.

Power-efficient bursts

Instead, the DVB-H technology bypasses cellular networks and broadcasts directly to cell phones in power-efficient bursts of data. As a result, you could watch live TV anytime, anywhere—in digital video quality and stereo sound.

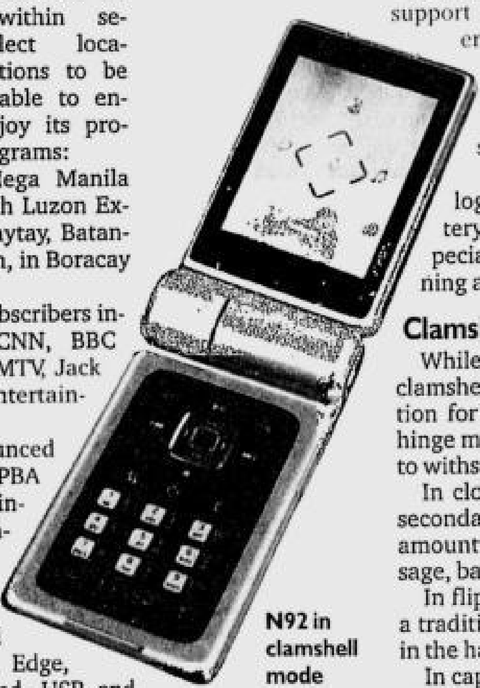
Sadly, myTV's reach is not nationwide yet, and you have to be within select locations to be able to enjoy its programs: Mega Manila (extending to North and South Luzon Expressway), Cebu, Davao, Tagaytay, Batangas, and Baguio City (and soon, in Boracay and Cagayan de Oro).

TV programs available to subscribers include the cable channels CNN, BBC World, CNBC, Basketball TV, MTV, Jack TV, Fashion TV and other entertainment channels.

In fact, myTV also announced that it plans to carry the PBA games live on its service beginning with the league's upcoming season.

Still a cell phone

Lest we forget, the N92 is still a cell phone so expect 3G, Edge, GPRS, WAP, Bluetooth, infrared, USB and wireless LAN among its connectivity options.



N92 in clamshell mode

Also, it has a 2.8-inch 16 million color screen (320 x 240 pixel resolution), a 2-megapixel primary camera plus a secondary one, which is useful for video calls, an FM radio (with support for visual radio and camera) and a mini SD card that supports up to 2 gigabytes of memory for storing up to 1,500 songs, or recording and storing broadcast TV program.

Considering the N92 is a technological tour de force, expect its battery life to be shorter than average (especially if several applications are running at the same time).

Clamshell

While the N92 is still considered a clamshell, it features a flip and fold function for a total of four usage modes. The hinge may look flimsy but its tough enough to withstand repeated twisting.

In closed mode the N92 features a tiny secondary screen that displays a limited amount of information namely time, message, battery and signal notifications.

In flip-open mode the phone operates as a traditional flip phone and it fits just right in the hand.

In capture mode, the screen twists 90 degrees so that it is at right angle to the keypad, much like holding a camcorder (the camera is located in the barrel of the hinge with the recording button located on the opposite side).

Finally in TV mode, the screen is rotated a further 90 degrees so that it becomes aligned with the long side of the keypad.

Because of these several screen orientations, operating the keypad is sometimes awkward and does take some getting used to.

Indeed, the N92 is a very powerful device. Being able to watch a TV program on this relatively tiny device does engender a sense of wonder. But at around P23,000, is the N92 worth it? Perhaps, especially if you appreciate the fact that you will about to own a device that many consider to be a significant leap forward for both the mobile and broadcast industries.

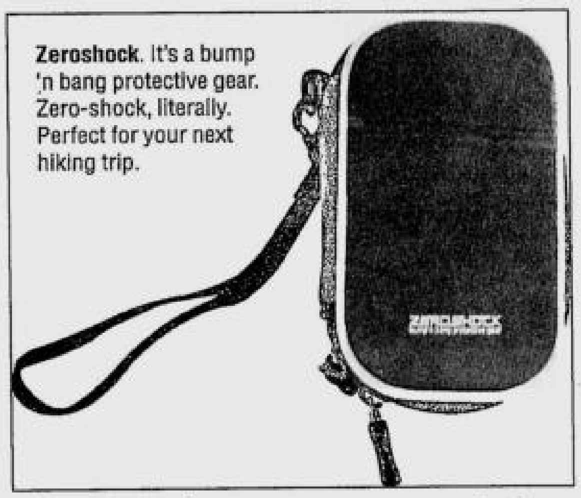
JAZZ TO IMPRESS

A techie's bible to gadget survival

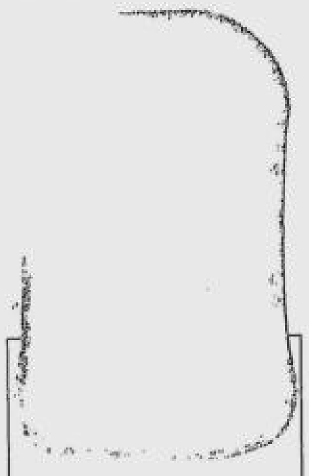
By Bernice Camille Bauzon, Eryzle Anne Masilag and Upper Viceo
Mobile Magazine

NOT ONLY WILL THESE ACCESSORIES dress up your gadgets, but they'll also serve as protective gear. Check out some of the latest accessories up for grabs:

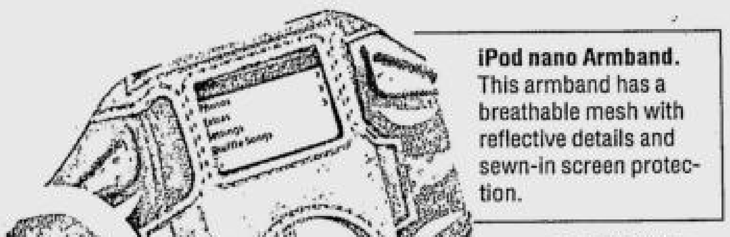
Imation Clip Flash Drive. It's password-protected and guarded by rubber exteriors, too. Talk about over-all security.



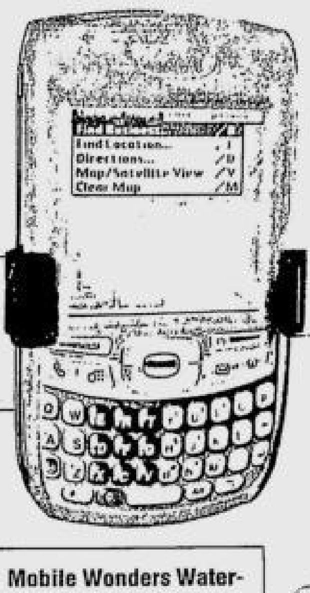
Zeroshock. It's a bump 'n bang protective gear. Zero-shock, literally. Perfect for your next hiking trip.



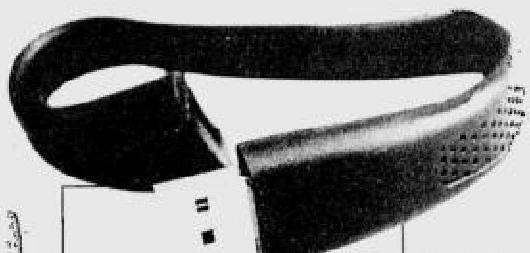
Sticky Mat. Placed on your car's dashboard, the Sticky Mat keeps electronic devices from falling sans the sticky residue. It also acts as air freshener.



iPod nano Armband. This armband has a breathable mesh with reflective details and sewn-in screen protection.

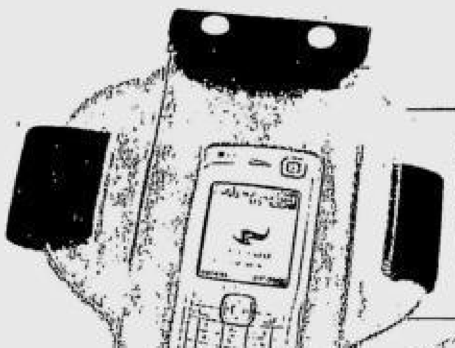


Speck See Thru. The all-terrain hardshell casing perfect for your Treo 680. Comes with a removable belt clip, too!

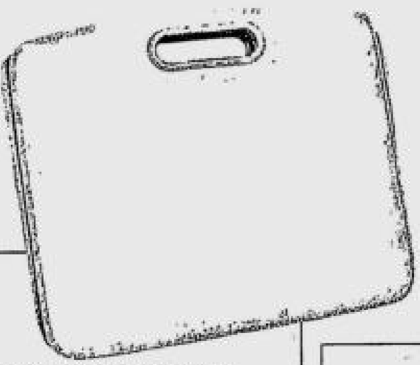


Imation Flash Wristband. Bring your files with you and never wonder where you've stashed that tiny flash drive.

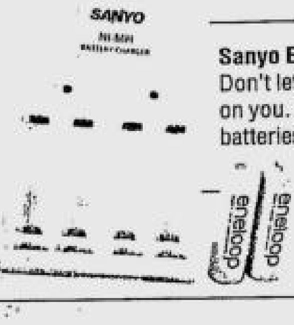
Speck ToughSkin. Because your Creative Zen V MP3 player needs extra TLC.



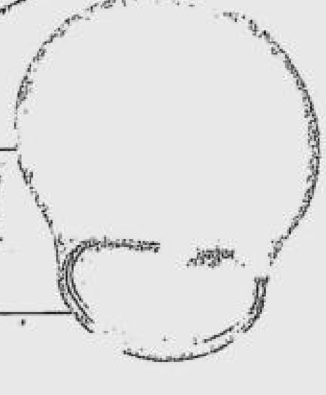
Mobile Wonders Waterproof Armband Case. Sound passes through the durable plastic material, so you don't have to miss your boss' call.



Belkin Sleeve Top. Every mobile geek just gotta have this sleek laptop sleeve.



Sanyo Eneloop Batteries. Don't let your digicam die on you. Get the Eneloop batteries now!



Wrist rest. Get one of these cool wrist rests with a detachable silicone padding.

AC Travel Charger. Simply plug in the USB cable and the adaptor to the AC outlet to charge your USB devices.

OpenOffice.org community ropes in IBM

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE OpenOffice.org COMMUNITY HAS ANnounced that IBM will be joining its project to develop a popular open source software suite.

Throwing its weight behind the OpenOffice.org's OpenDocument Format (ODF), IBM has committed to contribute programming codes that it has been developing as part of its Lotus Notes product, including accessibility enhancements.

IBM will also help make OpenOffice more accessible to those with disabilities. Aside from contributing technology, IBM will include versions of OpenOffice in its future products.

"In the seven years since Sun founded the project, OpenOffice.org has fueled and filled the need for document data and productivity tools that are open and free," said Rich Green, Executive Vice President, Software at Sun Microsystems Inc. "We look forward to working with IBM and other members of OpenOffice.org to ensure that this momentum continues. We invite others to join us ... and participate in building the future as OpenOffice.org and ODF continue to gain popularity across the planet."

OpenOffice.org is a multiplatform and multilingual office suite and an open-source project. Compatible with all other major office suites, the product is free to download, use and distribute. OpenOffice.org includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, database, and other modules. It uses the ODF or OpenDocument Format as its native file format but it also supports other common file formats, including Microsoft Office.

The software runs on all major platforms, including Windows, Vista, Linux, Solaris, Mac OS X, and is available in over 100 languages. OpenOffice.org is fully interoperable with other popular suites and may be used free of charge for any purpose, private or commercial; the license is LGPL.

"We believe this relationship will improve our ability to deliver innovative value to users of IBM products and services," said Mike Rhodin of IBM's Lotus division. "We also believe that the collaboration will lead to an even broader range of ODF-supporting applications (ISO 26300) and solutions that draw from the OpenOffice.org technology."

Until the advent of ODF, computers would lose access to electronic data if they switched software providers, making providers confident in charging high licensing fees.

ODF has now emerged as the only viable and internationally-approved document format. It is owned by the entire technical community, and not locked to the computing code of any one vendor.

Because open standards enable vendors' software to be interchangeable, electronic records can be accessed even if the user switches providers.

Acer recommends Windows Vista® Business.

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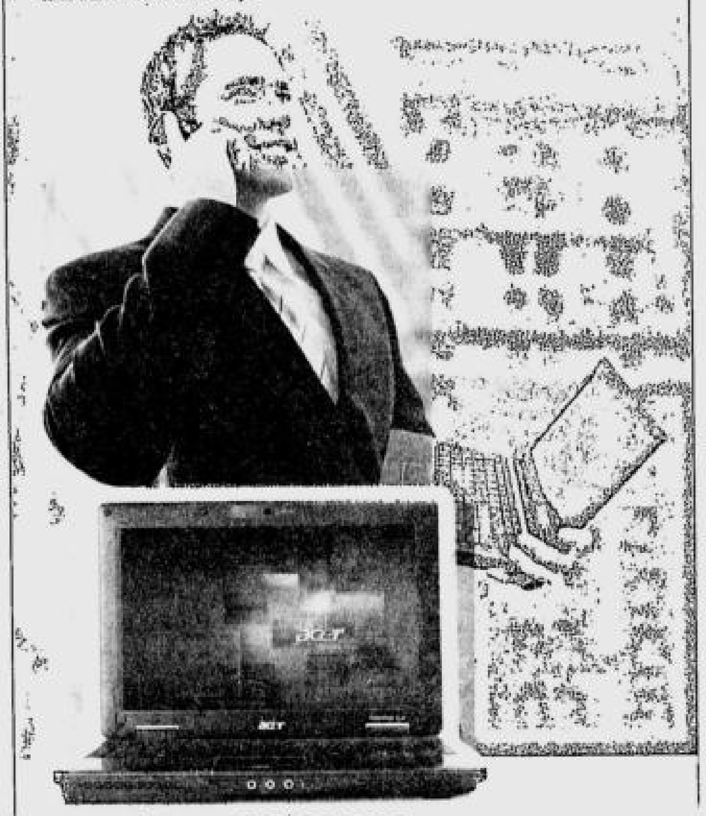

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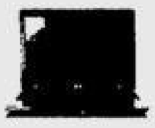

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BUSINESS*Monday*

Ayala breaks 'green' ground

Developer forms partnership with WWF

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AYALA Land partners with the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines. Marking the occasion are ALI officials led by AVP Jan Bengzon (left) and WWF president Lori Tan (2nd from left).

THE COUNTRY'S PREMIERE LAND DEVELOPER, Ayala Land Inc., is breaking "new, green" ground in its 1,700-hectare Canlubang community project in Laguna.

Ayala Land has formed a partnership with the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) to provide the property giant with a unique perspective in drafting the blueprint for an eco-friendly, energy efficient community at par with the world's best.

Ayala Land president Jim Ayala said: "We are doing a very holistic approach to this because at the end of the day, we are talking about a different way of looking at a project. It's very hard to make that change unless you see it holistically."

Ayala said that part of Ayala Land's fundamentals is to build communities that work properly and flourish over time.

"We cannot have communities, especially as large-scale as Project K, without fundamentally addressing these issues," said Ayala.

Jose Ma. Lorenzo P. Tan, president of WWF Philippines, said: "The challenge to meet is the requisite of sustainability. Traditionally, developers look at ecological footprint and social equity. Our help comes in terms of bringing technologies and experts as partners to figure out how this could be done best."

"It's not only a groundbreaking development, it is a groundbreaking relation between two organizations that are leaders in their respective fields. It's a unique collaboration, between nonprofit and for-profit organizations," said Ayala Land assistant vice president Jan Bengzon.

Erickson Y. Manzano, Ayala Land of operations Canlubang, said ALI tapped WWF because the Canlubang project would be the biggest in the Philippines.

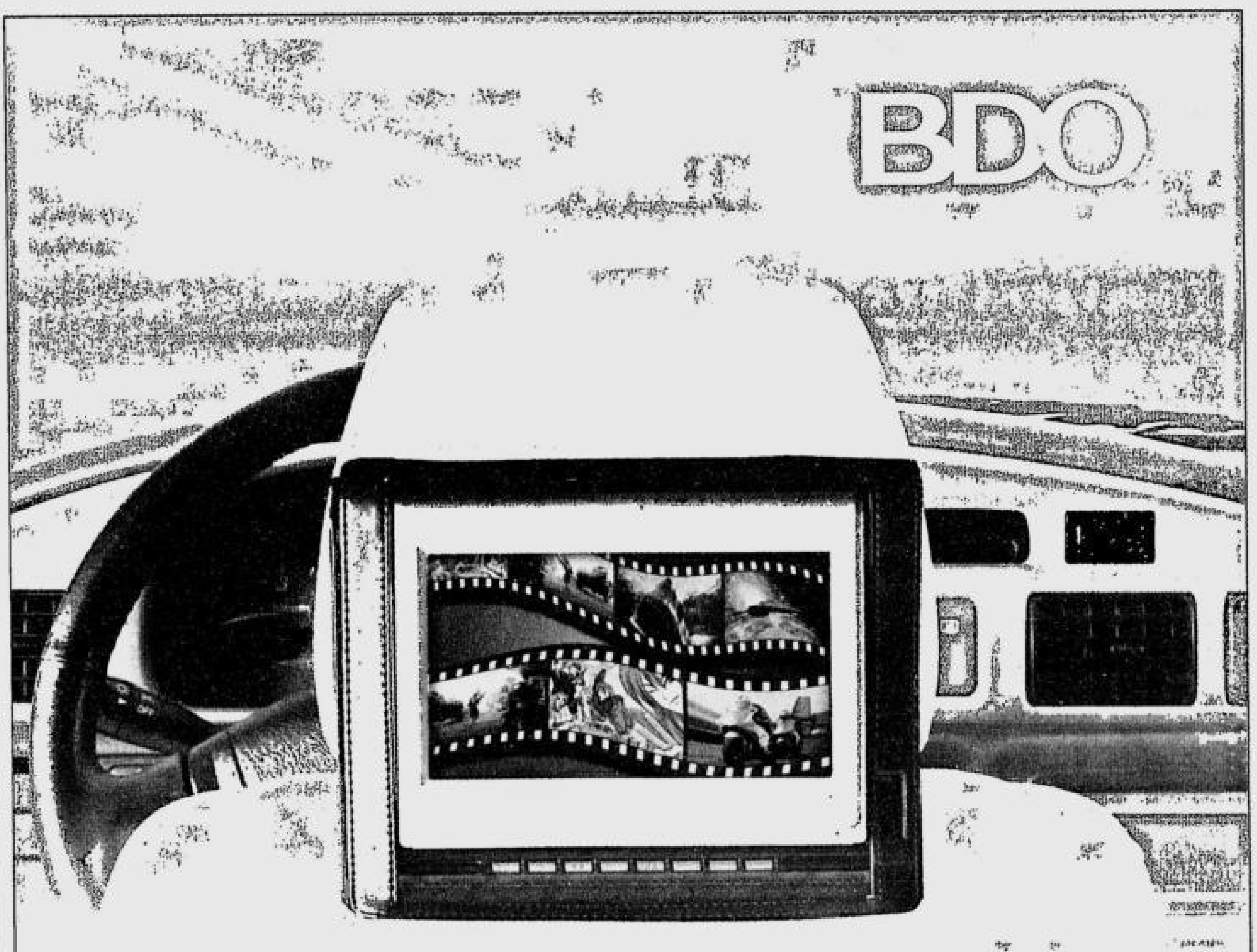
"It covers 1,700 hectares of former sugar lands owned by the Yulo family. It's about seven times as big as the Makati central business district," said Manzano.

Tan said Ayala Land was not satisfied with just complying with national building standards and meeting requirements like the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate, which is acceptable in the Philippines but not in other parts of the world.

Tan said the whole idea was to figure out how to include sustainability into projects.

Manzano also said Ayala Land chose WWF over the normal corporate advisers because it looks at environmental issues from a bigger perspective.

AYALA/ B3-2



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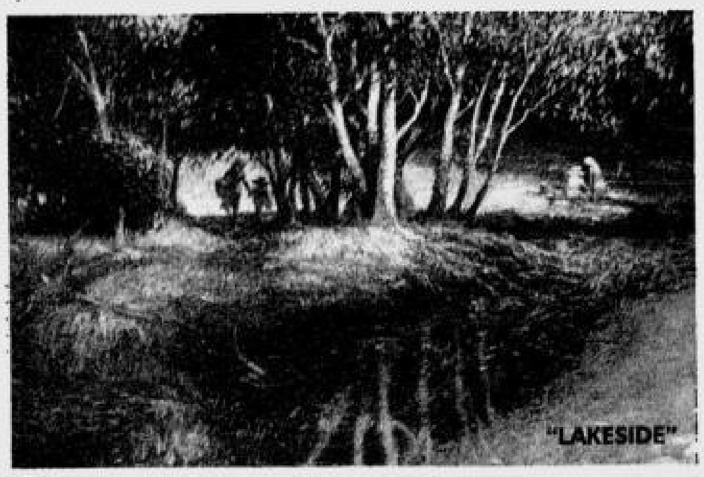


"LAKESIDE"

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ●

Greg Bolaños' art of *seduction*

By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

ARTISTS ARE ALWAYS seized by the power of seduction and their works usually attest to this, depicting eroticism and sensuality, and becoming a colorful testament to our

GREG/ C4

Creative ventures with the Sony Ericsson P1i

Take your imagination for a spin with the P1i, the latest in the highly popular series of smartphones from Sony Ericsson. It's slimmer but packs the most in possibilities for business and pleasure. There's a full QWERTY keyboard, a stylus for handwriting recognition and a virtual keyboard. That's three ways to easily jot ideas for the next big thing, or even illustrate them, on the large 2.6-inch touchscreen. The improved transflective display lets you view it even under bright lighting conditions in the great outdoors, the studio or the theater.

With push email services like Exchange ActiveSync™ and BlackBerry Connect 4.0, the P1i lets you receive emails in a snap. You can select your corporate account or personal emails to come on in to keep you in touch. Synchronize your tasks, notes, contacts, calendar and personal information with your PC or Mac.

The Sony Ericsson P1i lets you take care of business by letting you read and edit Word, Excel, PowerPoint and even PDF files on the go. It makes going mobile the best way to do business. With UMTS and integrated WLAN, the P1i assures you of ultra-fast web browsing, data downloads and emails. Enjoy your RSS feeds. Display websites in full, widescreen glory from the Opera™ Web Browser, while surfing anywhere via WiFi hotspots.

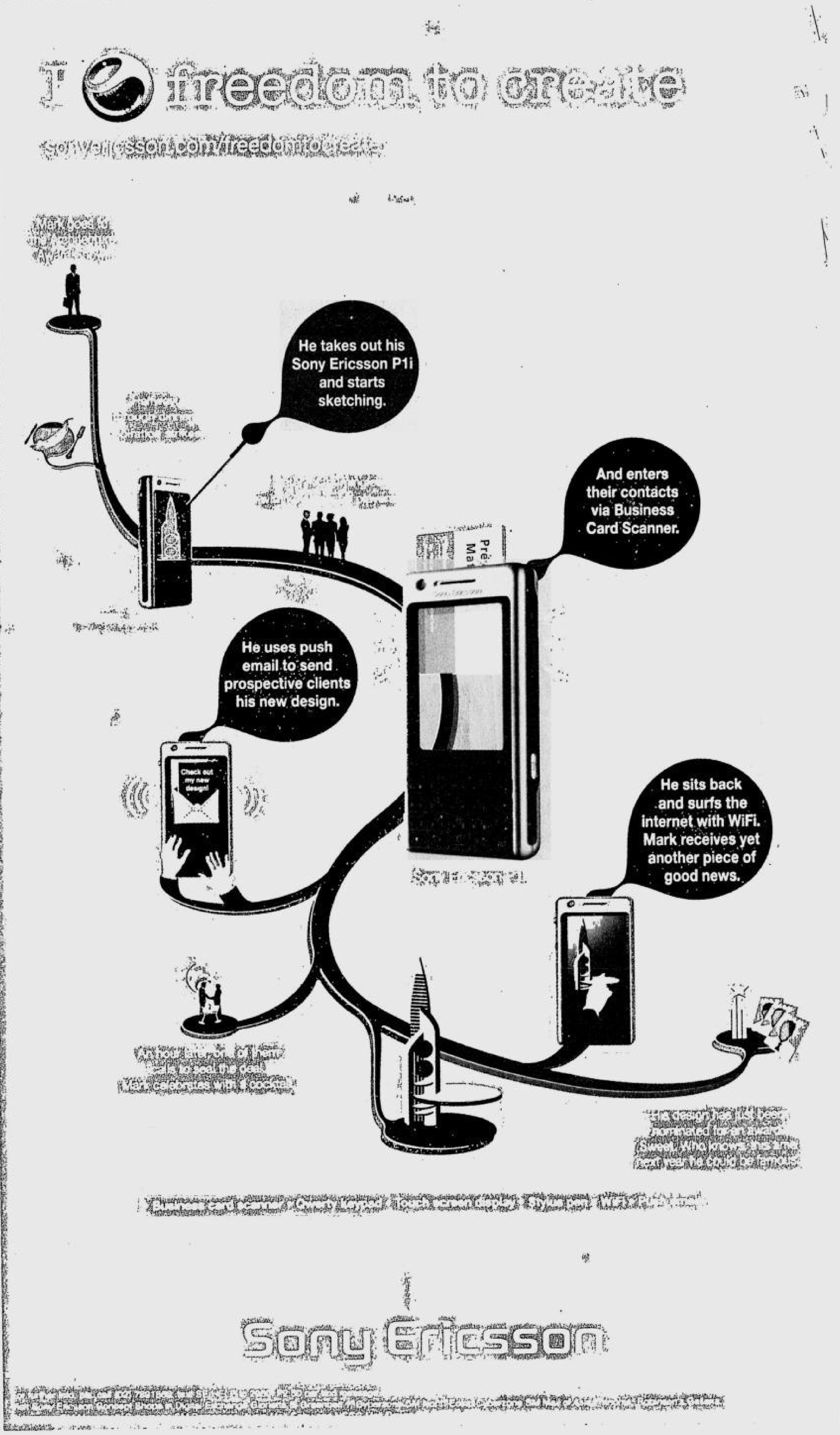
Bumping into potential partners at an awards show, gallery opening or premiere party? Have the P1i ready. Snap business cards with the 3.2-megapixel camera and the business card scanner will process and transfer the information directly to your contacts. And that's not all the camera can do. With autofocus, digital zoom and photo light, the P1i is about taking great pictures and video. Video recording, streaming and viewing are a cinch. You can even blog pictures straight away with its Picture Blogging application.

Have a P1i and travel. Jumping into another time zone doesn't mean this smartphone will suffer jet lag as well. Open up flight mode to be able to use its other applications on the plane. Set your appointments and when you move into another time zone, the P1i's dual time zone and calendar will update the appointment based on the difference.

Now it's not all business with this creative mobile companion. It's true that the P1i's new black and metallic shine and streamlined body makes it eye-catching in the boardroom, studio or yacht club. But underneath the chic design is a heart for fun. Enjoy the FM radio, 3D games, multi-format supported media player and Bluetooth stereo streaming capability. A host of optional Bluetooth accessories lets you make the most of its stereo sound.

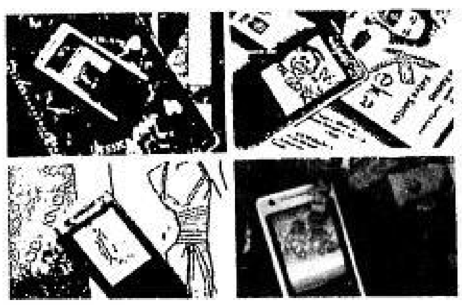
The P1i comes with a free 1GB Memory Stick Micro™ (M2™), aside from its internal 160 MB User Memory.

So what's a creative professional to do without some inspiration from the Sony Ericsson P1i? If you think out of the box, you'll want this in your pocket.



freedom to create
sonyericsson.com/freedomtocreate
He takes out his Sony Ericsson P1i and starts sketching.
And enters their contacts via Business Card Scanner.
He uses push email to send prospective clients his new design.
Check out my new design!
He sits back and surfs the internet with WiFi. Mark receives yet another piece of good news.
Mark celebrates with a cocktail.
Sony Ericsson

Creativity is just a PDA phone away



The new Sony Ericsson product can be a notebook, a sketchpad, a camera, whatever

CREATIVITY IS A VALUED trait in any business and integral to invention and innovation. Sony Ericsson's latest PDA phone, the P1i, was designed to aid creativity by being whatever its user needs when inspiration strikes him—a notebook, a sketchpad, a camera, and a means to do business wherever you are.

The following people are great examples of those who combine creativity and business savvy.

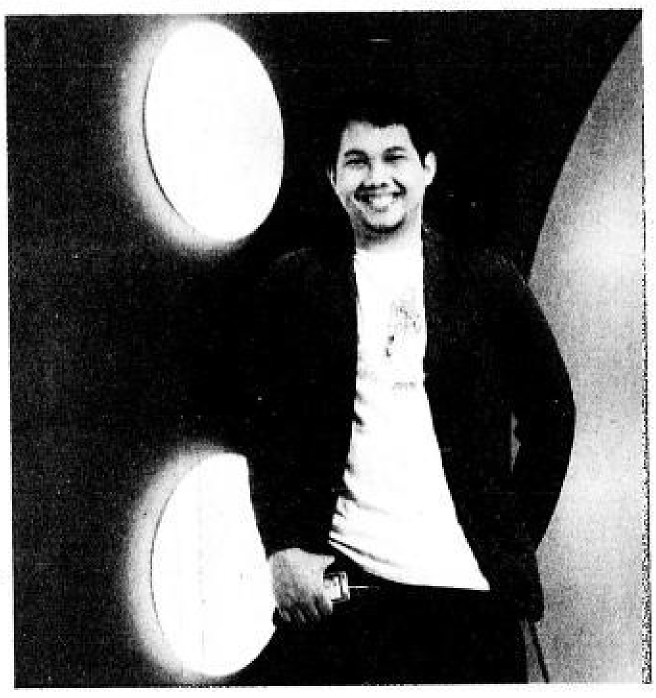
Irony dot.com

Known for her ironic wit and self-deprecating sense of humor which have been on display in her numerous books (from the "Twisted" series to "Chicken Pox for the Soul"), Jessica Zafra started her domination of the World Wide Web in 2005, through her equally entertaining blog Jessicarulestheuniverse.com.

"The advantage of Filipino bloggers," she said, "is that the Philippines is an endless source of material. You can find things to blog about just from sitting in traffic."

She updates her blog via the "very useful" P1i. With WiFi and a 3.2-megapixel camera, "I can check my blog and upload new entries from wherever I am," and that's usually at noisy restaurants or cafés where she likes to work.

Zafra is now involved in a project that could help make blogging a full-fledged business in the country. "I'm with Mad Cow Media. We're organizing the best Filipino blogs so we can approach advertisers and negotiate with them as a single network. The single objective is for bloggers to get paid for something they already do."



Beyond the reel

Many know Quark Henares, director of "Keka," "Super Noypi," and "Wag Kang Lilingon," and director-producer of music videos for some of today's hottest bands.

What most people probably don't know is that this filmmaker is also an entrepreneur who channels his creativity into two productive ventures. Blow-up Babies is a photography studio he put up with friends because "the industry we all work in is very unsteady and volatile, so it was nice to have something that was like an office environment but fun and happy."

Henares has also put up Mag:net, a music bar born out of Quark's love for music. The place features a healthy mix of artists and even a gallery of contemporary art Henares' partner Rock Drilon curates.

Managing his work and business responsibilities takes a bit of juggling, which Henares does with the help of his P1i. "My whole Mag:net music schedule is in my phone. The notepad is where I jot down all these ideas I have about dialogues and situations, while the mass text function is great because I can contact my staff, employees or partners with one click."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUN DE LEON
STYLING BY MILLET ARZAGA
MAKEUP BY LOU PAREJA
THANKS TO POWERBOOKS, SHANGRI-LA PLAZA

Resident game boss

If people assume it's all fun and games for someone who works at Level Up! (LU), the biggest online gaming company in the country, they're wrong.

Ben Colayco, chief operating officer of LU International, oversees the operations in three countries, including India and Brazil.

"It's interesting how you really need to 'practice' creativity," Colayco said. "A lot of people think creativity is this amorphous whimsical thing only eccentric people are lucky enough to capture. But those people are actually disciplined and 'practice' creativity by making sure they are always exposed to new things."

At the helm of the pioneer publisher of online games in the country, Colayco is often up and about figuring out how best to deliver the game experience to users, optimize IT infrastructure and satisfy the consumer.

It's a good thing "the P1i helps me stay on top of the things I need to do," Colayco said. "It's great that it's got quadband and 3G so I'm always connected in whatever country I'm in. The e-mail application is also great and, with the widescreen of the P1i, reading e-mail and surfing the net is much easier."

House of fashion

Rajo Laurel, fashion designer, has produced collections of exceptional quality and innovative design.

"I always look to journeys to provide me with inspiration," Laurel said. "I get excited about journeying to a place I've never been to, through a book, the cinema, or through interaction with a person I have just met."

Melding creativity with business sense, Laurel has put up House of Laurel, the exclusive boutique that showcases his ready-to-wear line. His fast-paced schedule and constant traveling are never a hindrance for developing and documenting his design ideas.

"I've always had a sketchbook where I could take down my inspirations, and when I leave it in the office, the P1i is my sketchbook. I can write little notes to myself, take photos of things that inspire me, listen to music. The pen input gives me the freedom to be creative."

Beyond the musty air of academicism

By Constantino C. Tejero

MANY ACADEMIC PAINTINGS are based on passages of literature, from Homer and the Scriptures through Shakespeare and Dante to lesser known literary works.

Aside, of course, from the art of the Renaissance and the Baroque, among the most recognizable literary paintings are those of the Neoclassicists like David, the Romantics like Géricault and Delacroix, the Pre-Raphaelites like Waterhouse, Millais and Rossetti.

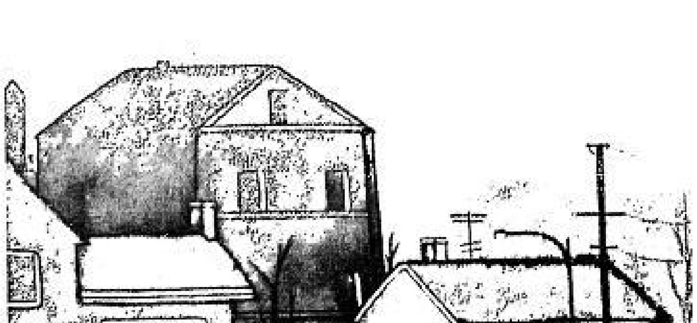
The images are usually of characters or scenes from Shakespeare, Tennyson, the Bible, mythology, "The Purgatorio," or historical events memorialized in songs and legends.

These are lovely, often powerful works, but one's experience of them would be so much enriched if one knows beforehand the literary passages on which they've been based. Double, in fact: the amazement of the visual composition and the incalculable pleasure of literature.

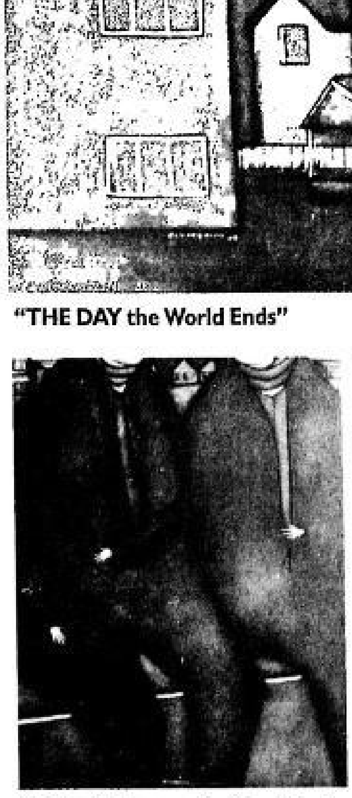
In the case of illustrating plays, biblical passages, lives of saints, mythical tales and narrative poems, the transmutation from page to canvas is often literal, accounting for the rather musty air and academic feel of the painting.

The most delicate and probably the hardest is illustrating a lyric, as here one is bound to capture only a subtle mood, vague atmosphere or opaque emotion, and one is often left to wield nothing but flimsy allusions. Sometimes one would be forced to yield originality of idea and execution that the resultant painting has become divorced from its literary origin.

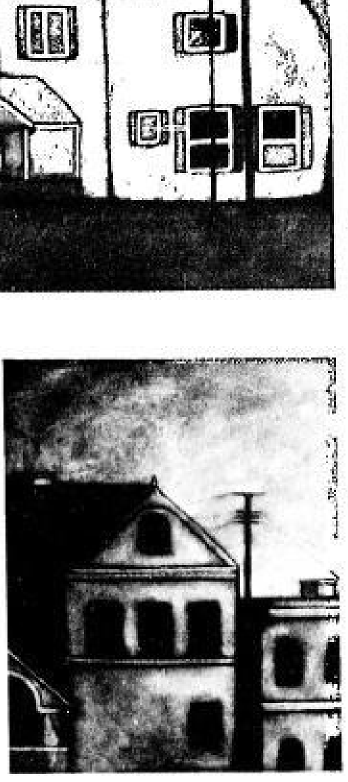
This was what Allan Jay Balisi had tasked himself in trying to capture in visual terms Czeslaw Milosz's "A Song on the End of the World."



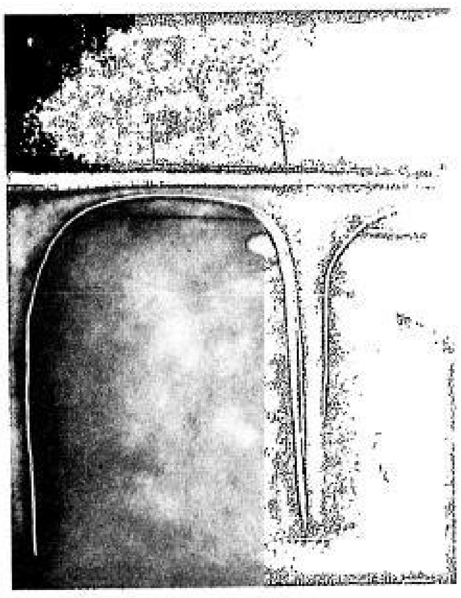
"THE DAY the World Ends"



"A LITTLE Pat on the Shoulder"



"JOYFUL Exit"



"SWEET Waters"

Go and see how far the painter has succeeded or failed in his task in "Neighborhood," pieces in oil on canvas, until Sept. 24 in Blanc Art Space, 2E Crown Tower, 107 HV de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City.

The Nobel laureate's vision of Götterdämmerung is one long list of banalities ending in serenity and rapture: bee circling a clover; fisherman mending a net; happy porpoises in the sea; young sparrows by the rainspout; women walking under umbrellas; drunkard sleeping on the lawn; vegetable peddlers shouting in the street; sailboat nearing an island; old man tending to his tomatoes—on the day the world ends. (This is reminiscent of Auden's "Musée des Beaux-Arts," which sees the momentous fall of Icarus as the world goes on its routine commonplace way.)

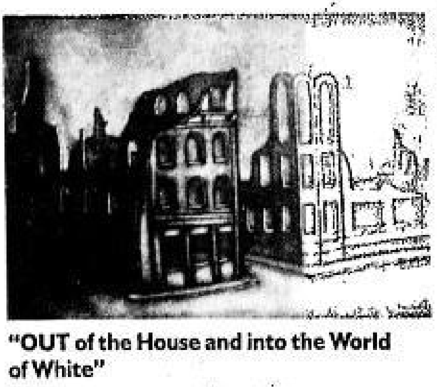
Balisi says he was inspired by the poem, which "would best describe how the works for this show was created." As far as we can see, however, his series of images inspires a perfectly different feeling in us.

Limiting his palette to blue, slate-blue, blue-green, gray, black, brown, with occasional patches of orange, umber, green, Balisi has created a washed-out world of vast desolation: scenes of uninhabited buildings, empty streets and bridges, great ruins. The whole is reminiscent of the color tonality, the melancholy and mysterious quality of the works of Delvaux and De Chirico.

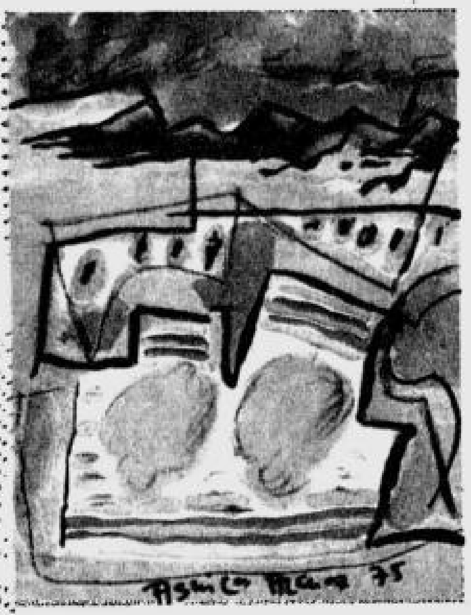
Balisi's titles range from the suggestive, like "Homesick" and "Out of the House and into the World of White," to the ironic, like "Sweet Waters," "Best Days," "Joyful Exit."

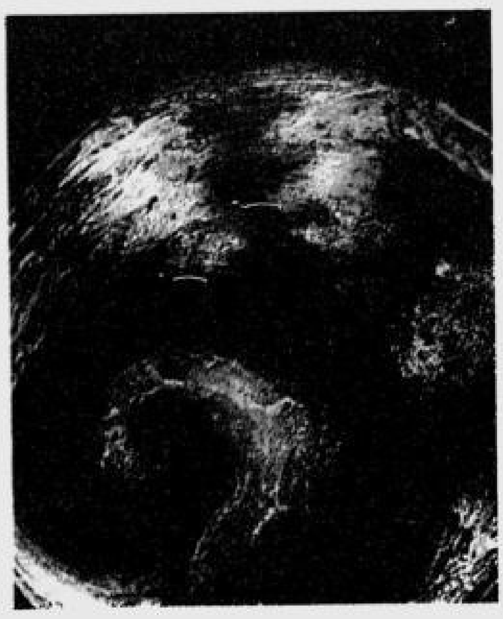
All look dreary, over-serious, somewhat literal illustration of endtime, which is not the spirit of Milosz's lyric at all. While the poem has managed to draw an upbeat response from the reader, the paintings give a downbeat note to the viewer.

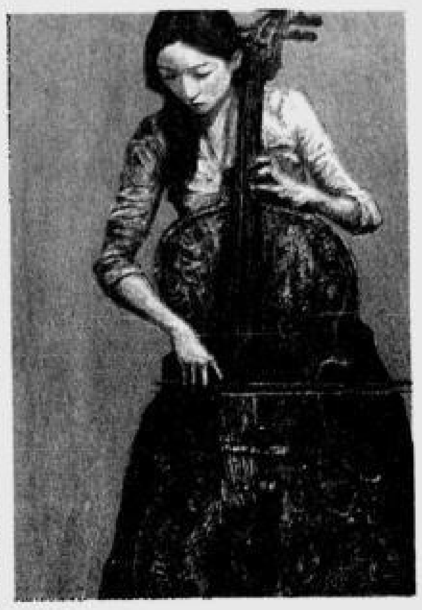
The only piece in the exhibit that evokes the banality of the apocalypse, as what Milosz must have in mind, is "The Day the World Ends," with its wry coupling of title and uncharacteristically vibrant color. It is a perfect image for the bleakness of the everyday, tinged with anticipation of eternity.

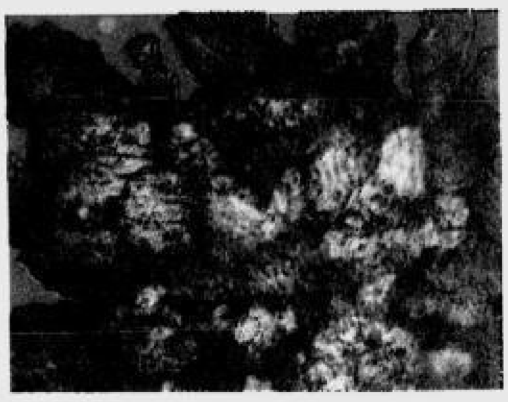


"OUT of the House and into the World of White"









FROM LEFT: **"Madrid Series" II, by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz; "Whelk," by Karina Baluyut; "Cellist," by Vincent de Pio; "Spring Concerto," by Juvenal Sanso**

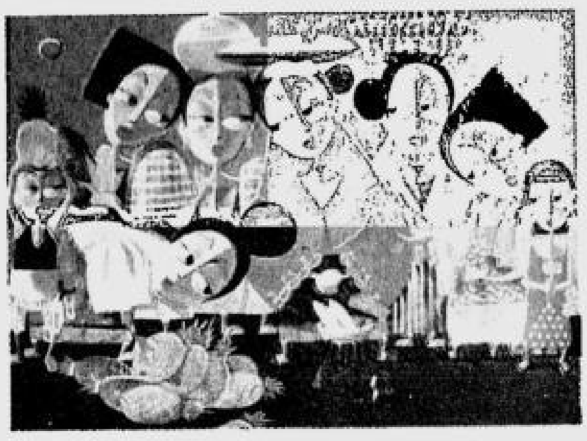
Art auction to raise funds for good causes

SIXTY PAINTINGS FROM 30 artists will be featured in "Art for a Cause," a fund-raising project of the Rotary Club of Makati Bel-Air. The exhibit opens Sept. 25, 7 p.m., and runs until Oct. 4.

The works can be previewed at Galerie Joaquin Main (371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan).

The works are by Juvenal Sanso, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, Mario Parial, Gig de Pio, Lydia Velasco, Carlo Magno, Dominic Rubio, Karma Baluyut, Eufemio Rasco IV, Nell Campos, Gene de Loyola, Edwin Tres Reyes, Glenn Cagandahan, Jovan Benito, Jerry Morada, Vincent de Pio, Aileen Lanuza, Bayani Ray Acala, Jaspher Penuliar, Aljo Pingol, Amador Barquilla, Richard Arimado, Aidrino Abes, Renato Marbella, Nomer Martinez, Chubern di Loretto, Felix Tiglao, Jerome Francisco, Marcial Boneo and Nikulas Lebajo.

The auction seeks to raise funds for Rotary's advocacies, such as Gawad Kalinga Sibol Literacy Program, which will raise funds for classrooms and for teachers' training, allowances, food and uniforms; the GK Feeding Sibol program, to cover food and nutritional requirements of at least 40 children for six to 10 months; the GK Water Filtering project for the GK-Welfareville community; the GK youth development and training program; the GK Sibol Anti-TB program; and the Welfareville Tsinelas Patrol Program.



"MARKET Scene," by Jovan Benito

To the artists, "Art for a Cause" is a thanksgiving for the good fortune they have been enjoying during the past several years. Sanso, Alcuaz, Parial, Velasco, Rasco and Magno's works have been featured in several auctions at Sotheby's, while works of Jerry Morada, Vincent de Pio, Aileen Lanuza, Jaspher Penuliar have been recently accepted by the international auction house Larasati for inclusion in its Oct. 21 auction of Southeast Asian paintings in Singapore. Dominic Rubio, Edwin Tres Reyes and Jovan Benito have had shows in Singapore.

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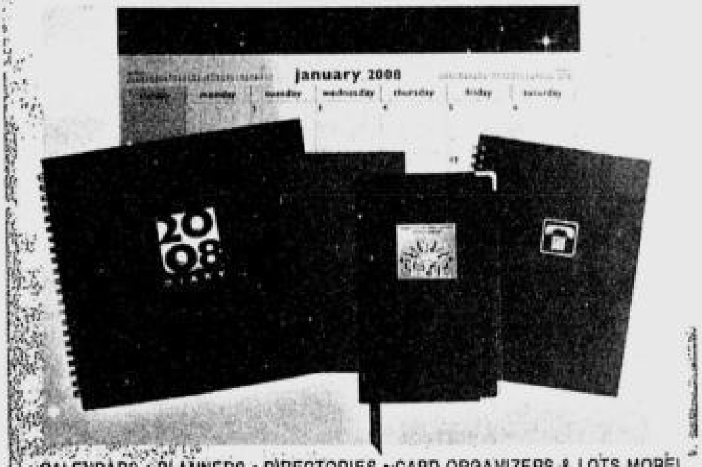

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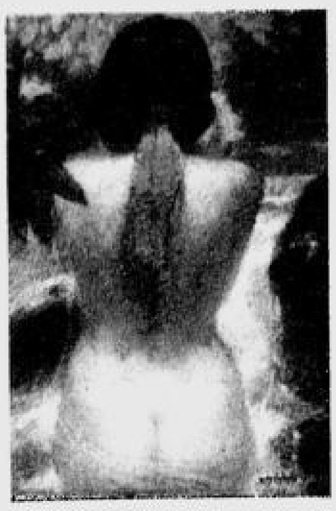
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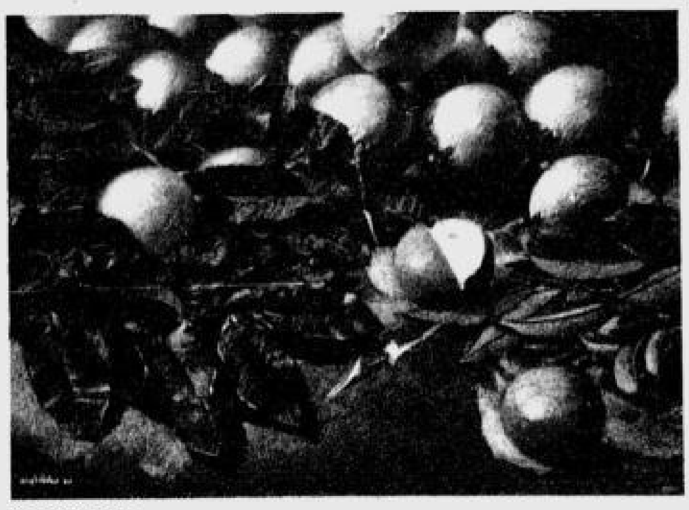
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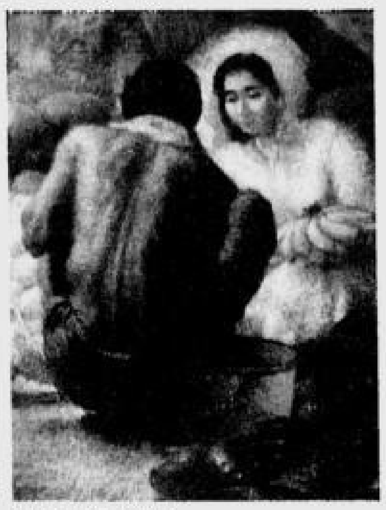
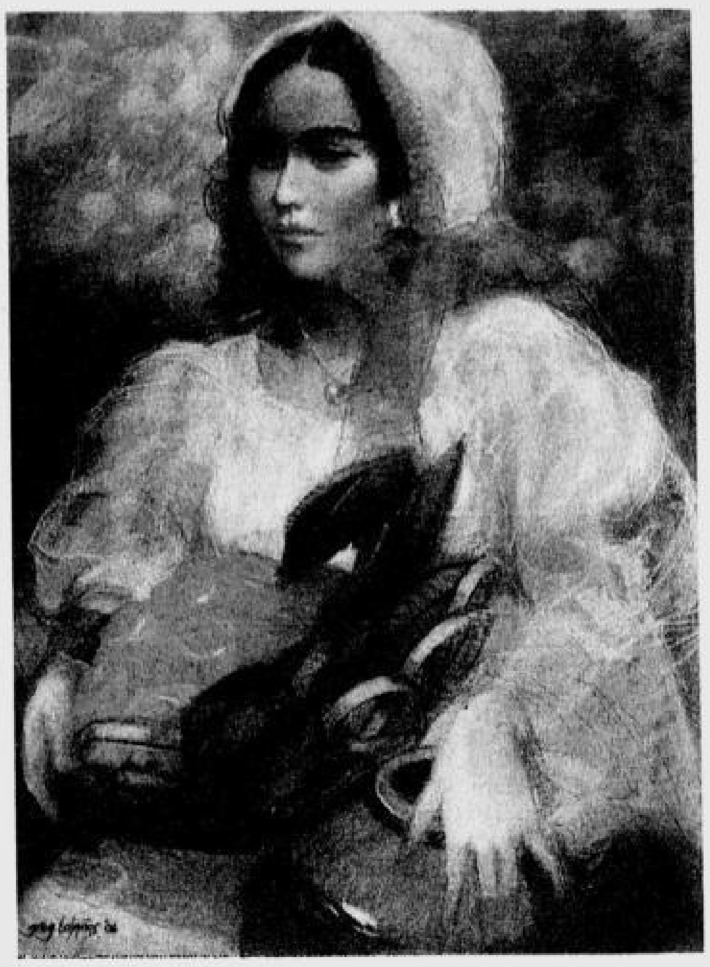

"TAG-ARAW" 3


"RED Macopa"

Greg Bolaños' art of seduction

From page C1

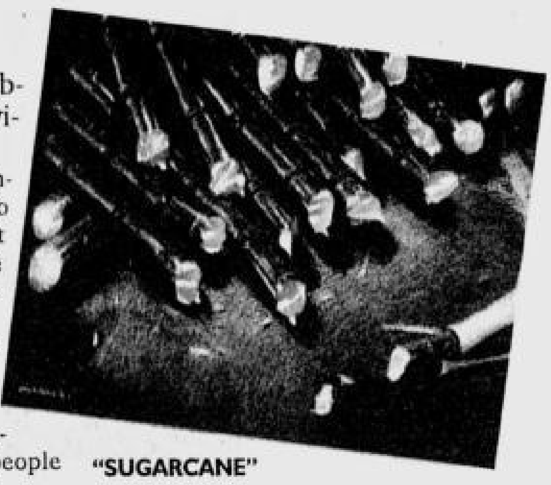
unceasing longing for the sublime despite the limits of our vision.

We dream of heaven when life is, indeed, unbearably hellish. We desire to be reunited with loved ones even at the risk of suffering alone. And we succumb to fantasy amid the real jungle we live in.

Seasoned artist Greg Bolaños has always been sensitive to the war waged within our souls, and his rapturous art reveals the secret of insatiable desire that has intrigued people over the centuries.

In "Paradise," we see a half-nude woman probably about to take a bath in a stream. She has reason not to be terrified—after all, in paradise one is not afraid of one's nakedness. Like her, we are also invited in that stream perhaps to fathom what we have lost. We take a plunge to momentarily leave the all too-familiar everyday scenes.

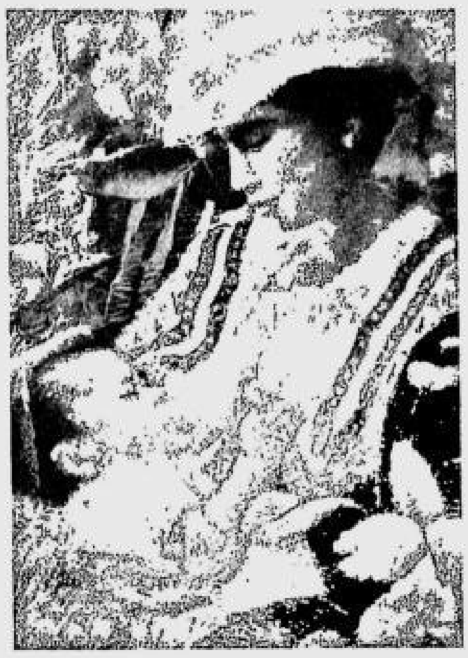
We hope to regain the feeling where the air is as sweet as the luscious fruits, in the world of plenty where all our needs are met. This is perhaps why Bolaños' favorite subject is the fruit as depicted in such works as "Sugarcane" and "Kaimito." This reminds us of the edenic pleasure we have either repressed or forgotten.


"SUGARCANE"

Sacred time

The paradise theme reverberates in most of Bolaños' works, as in a woman selling fruits in "Red Macopa," or a couple or family about to lunch in "Tag-araw III" and "Lakeside." These works reveal the notion of sacred time, a time when people are much closer to nature and a time not dictated by mechanical reproduction.

For most Filipinos, time is experienced by meals and announced by the ambulant vendors peddling their wares in the streets. Hence, in "Red Macopa," the woman is the Filipinos' time archetype, just as she used to punctuate the intervals in our meals and intrude in our daily lives. She prepares the meals of her husband, as that idyllic scene intimates, and in these works we are comforted by her presence.


"SULTANA"

Cravings

Bolaños' secret is to titillate our senses and to work on our craving.

Thus, the scenes he chose to depict pulsate with life-affirming aura, whether a woman vendor or a mother who looks at her baby, hypnotized, as in "Sultana." The Madonna is, indeed, a powerful image that entrance people over the years. It is as old as history itself.

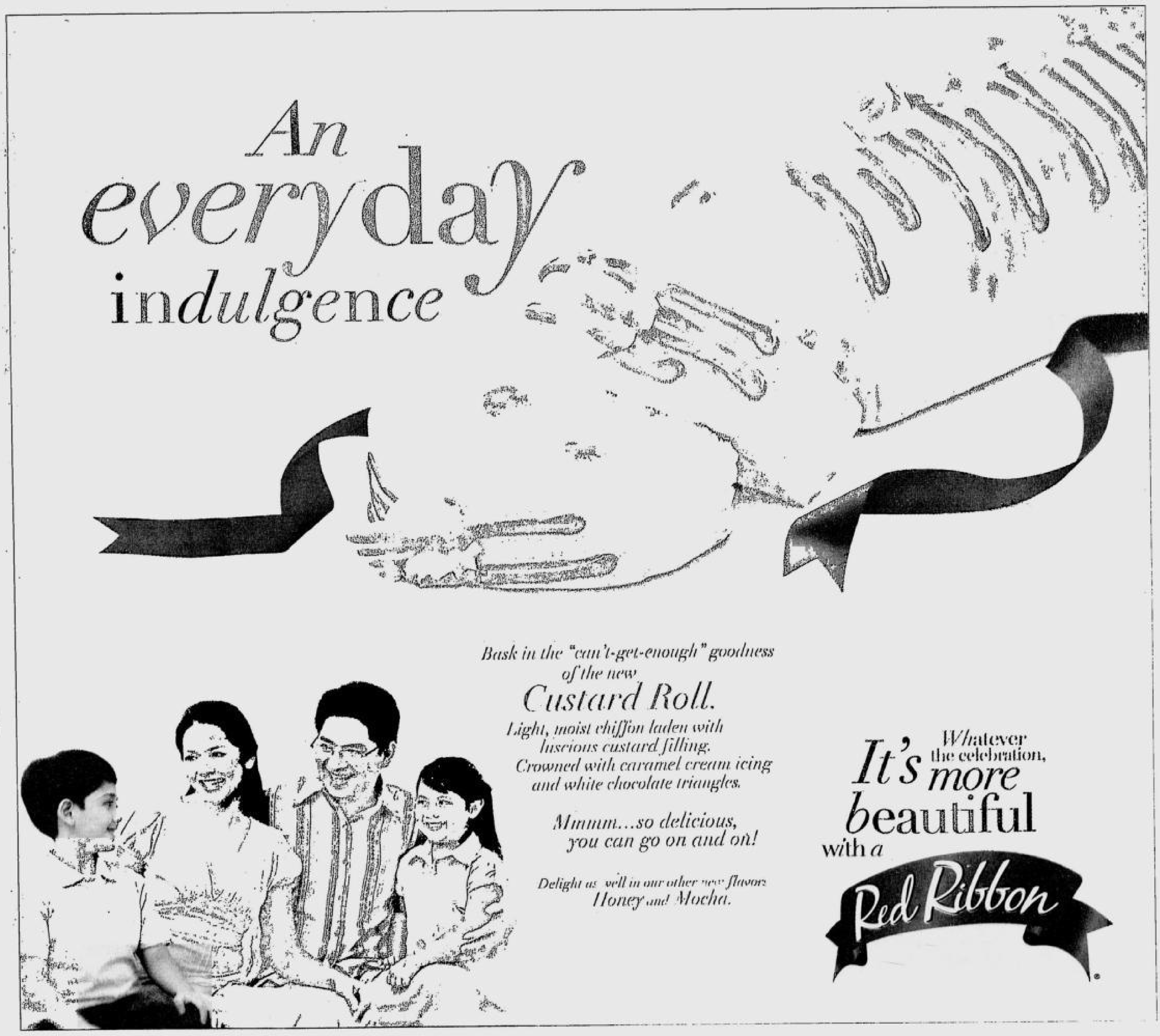
> His rapturous art reveals the secret of insatiable desire

One is overwhelmed by the tonic of a mother's love for her child. Bolaños allows us to see ourselves in his works because we are also that child who longs the caress of a mother in these politically and economically troubled times.

It is during this time when we want to retreat to our paradise, not to forget what is happening but more to remind us that there is something worth fighting and living for in this country.

If there's one truth in Greg Bolaños' works, it is the fact that what we see in these scenes is also what we hear—they are, indeed, the throbbing of our hearts and to deny that is to deny what life is all about.

"Greg Bolaños' Bookpieces" opens 6 p.m. today at Choice Expression Gallery, 2/F Doña Consolacion Bldg., 122 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati. Call 8990718 or 0917-8941405. Exhibit runs until Sept. 29.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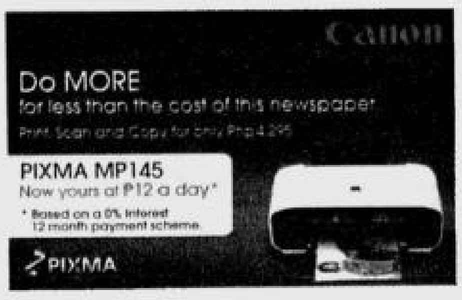
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'Next' to nothing

"Next: A Novel"
By Michael Crichton
(HarperCollins, New York 2006, 431 pages)

By Ruel S. De Vera

PERFECTLY IN KEEPing as a creative thinker constantly searching for the next big idea for his books, Michael Crichton has himself undergone an evolution as an author. First, he tended to overcook his novels by mixing pages and pages of scientific explanation with flimsy but propulsive plots, often taking scientific fact and then irradiating it into irresistible Hollywood-style fiction, something very much evident in "The Andromeda Strain" and, of course, "Jurassic Park."

But recently, Crichton has gone in altogether different vector. Now, he takes a scientific issue he feels strongly about and when writes a meatier, more complex novel around it, hewing closely to science fact while fictionalizing the hot-button aspect, something on display with "Prey" (nanotechnology), and the very controversial "State of Fear" (global warming).

Thus, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that Crichton's 15th novel follows that later trend. "Next" is Crichton's treatise on the science and business of genetic engineering, an area as broad as this book's title is vague. From the onset, Crichton seems determined to challenge the reader to tell make-believe apart from didn't-you-know. The novel's disclaimer reads: "This novel is fiction except for the parts which aren't."

With that in mind, Crichton then initiates the reader into the world of genetic engineering through a series of news reports ("Blondes becoming extinct") and of course, the plot itself. This time, Crichton weaves a DNA-level story with entire expeditions of characters.

Legal battle over genetics

Among the many plot threads "Next" employs is the following: the ongoing legal battle between genetics company BioGen and the cells of Frank Burnet, the mysterious changes done to corpses at Long Beach Memorial, BioGen employee Josh Winkler's clandestine testing of the company's "maturity" serum on people he knows, the supposed existence of a Dutch- and French-speaking Orangutan deep in the Sumatran jungle, a geneticist named Henry Kendall and his family's attempt to disguise an intelligent human-chimpanzee hybrid named Dave as one of their own, the road trip of bounty hunters named Vasco and Dolly, the ruthless agenda of the National Institute of Health's Rob Bellarmino and, not to forget, an intelligent and extremely chatty parrot named Gerard.

That isn't a plot, that's soup. "Next" has so many things going on at the same time that it really is hard to figure out what exactly the reader needs to focus on. Crichton doesn't leave the reader hanging. Somehow, he really does manage to tie together all those seemingly unconnected subplots—but the way it all comes together is even more unbelievable than the idea of a transgenic chimp passing himself off as a student with an inherited hair problem.

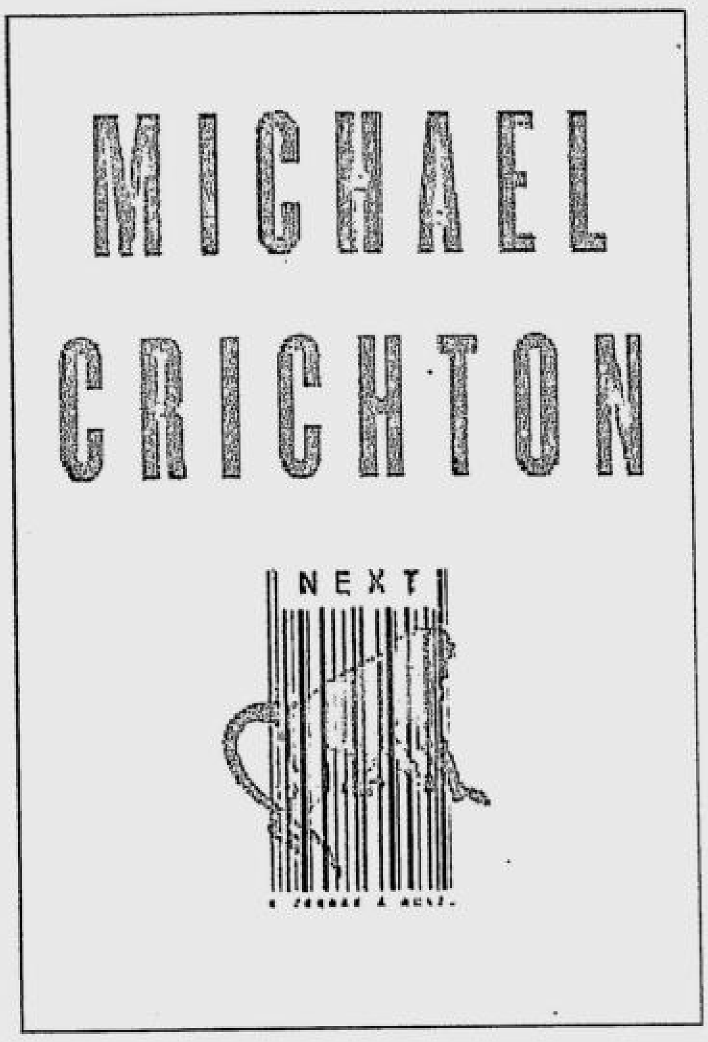
Fascinating moments

"Next" does have its fascinating moments, particularly when Crichton shows how exactly companies and even universities are somehow patenting genes, leading to a race to patent one gene before someone else does. His little news reports are humorous but on the mark, and he does work at moving the plot forward relentlessly.

But much that is undone by the sheer silliness of Crichton tries to stage with a straight face—and that's not even including the one element that Crichton clearly inserts for a humorous purpose. The travails of the chatty parrot Gerard aren't even funny. At one point, readers of "Next" will sincerely want to put the bird—and the reader by extension—out of its misery. Another major weakness is that, unlike his other books, there really isn't anything to terrify the reader in "Next," no bogeyman, T-Rex, killer bacterium or alien artifact.

Which is unfortunate considering that "Next" is the project where Crichton actually has more narrative than exposition. But more subplots do not automatically translate into a better novel, especially if readers can't tell the characters apart. An ambitious novel undermined by its overripe conspiracy of events, Michael Crichton's newest book at least has a title that readers can identify with, because that's exactly what they'll say upon reading this one: "Next, please."

Available at National Book Store



The 'Jurassic Park' author goes for something a little different, but his latest novel goes straight to the apes

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Book club focuses on Gaiman novel

LONG AFTER THE DECLINE of fairytale classics, a modern saga of fantasy tales continues to live on with prolific writer Neil Gaiman.

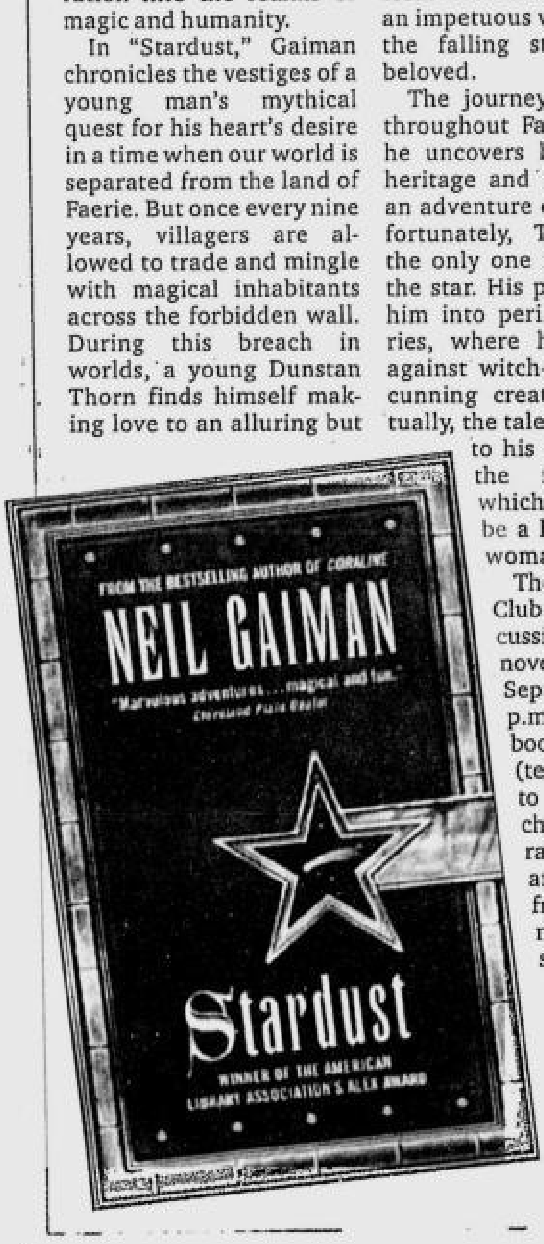
This month, Power Book Club features "Stardust," his exhilarating exploration into the realms of magic and humanity.

In "Stardust," Gaiman chronicles the vestiges of a young man's mythical quest for his heart's desire in a time when our world is separated from the land of Faerie. But once every nine years, villagers are allowed to trade and mingle with magical inhabitants across the forbidden wall. During this breach in worlds, a young Dunstan Thorn finds himself making love to an alluring but cursed faerie maiden.

Nine months later, a human infant endowed with certain faerie features and abilities is found at the crack in the barrier. The boy named Tristan Thorn soon falls in love with Victoria Forester and makes an impetuous vow to catch the falling star for his beloved.

The journey takes him throughout Faerie, where he uncovers his mystical heritage and embarks on an adventure of sorts. Unfortunately, Tristan isn't the only one in search of the star. His pursuit takes him into perilous territories, where he is pitted against witch-queens and cunning creatures. Eventually, the tale unravels into his discovery of the fallen star, which turns out to be a lovely young woman.

The Power Book Club will hold discussions on the novel on Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m. at Powerbooks-Megamall (tel. 635-2898 to 99). Get a chance to win raffle prizes and free coffee from the Javaman Coffee shop.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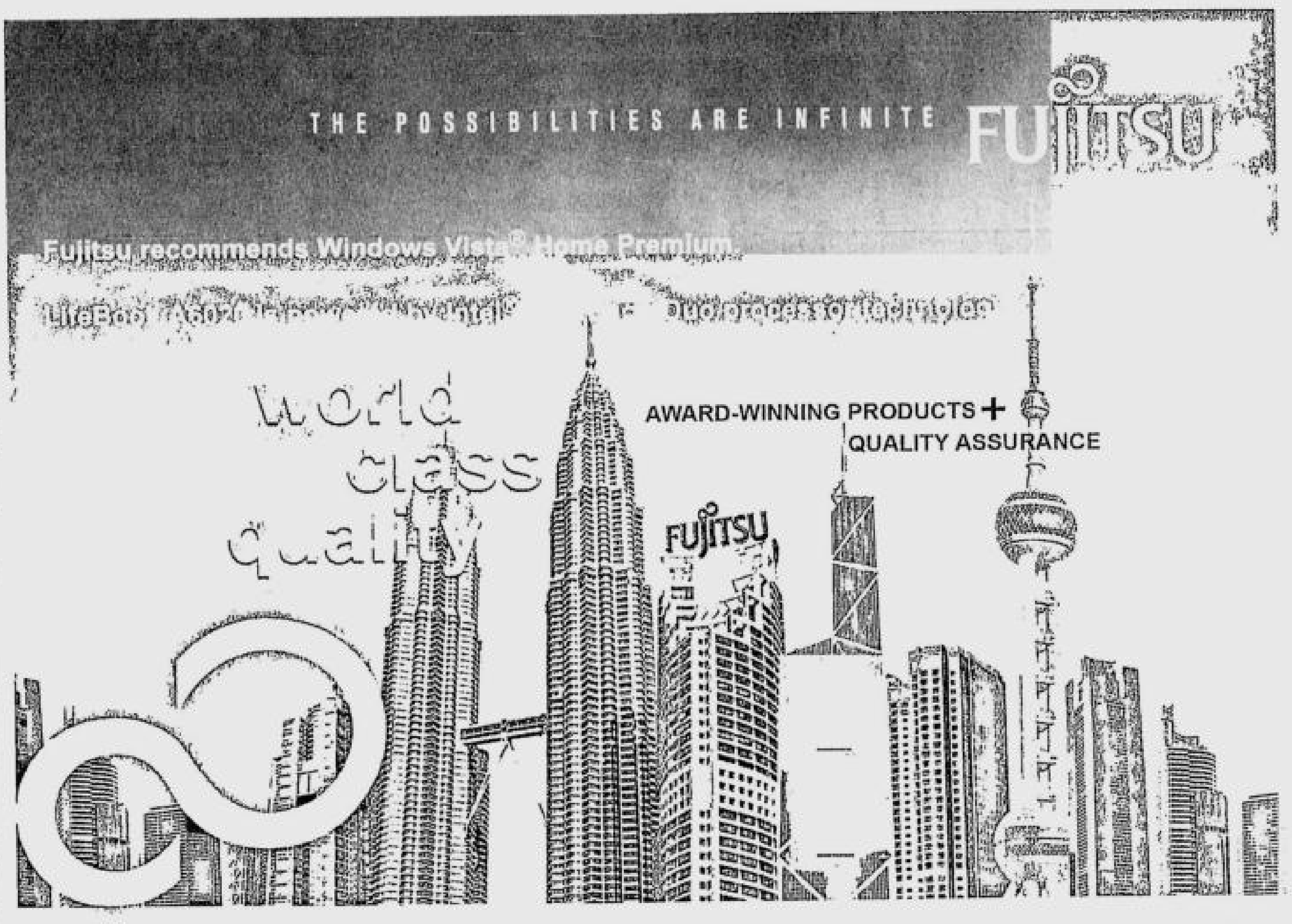
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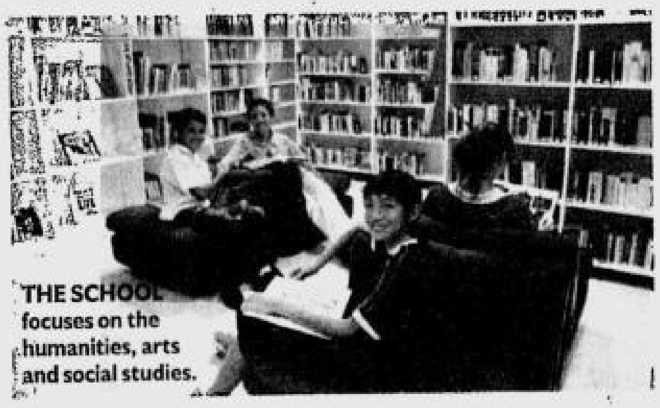

THE SCHOOL focuses on the humanities, arts and social studies.

TWELVE-YEAR program after preschool prepares students for the French Baccalauréat.

THE SCHOOL emphasizes the sciences and modern technology.

The French connection in education

FOR CENTURIES, ICONS OF French culture have tickled the fancy of many Filipinos—Napoleon Bonaparte, Victor Hugo, Louis Pasteur, Catherine Deneuve, Charles de Gaulle, among others. In fact, revolutionary leader Andres Bonifació was greatly inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution—equality, liberty, fraternity—which helped guide the Katipunan movement.

Many people view France as an epitome of democracy and progress which can be attributed to a tradition of quality education.

But one need not travel half-way around the world to get this world-class pedagogy.

In a quiet village in the heart of the metropolis, Ecole Française de Manille (EFM), a French-run international school, beckons to students from all walks of life who go for French education, lifestyle and culture early on in their lives.

Founded in 1978, the school offers primary and secondary programs which conform to the curriculum set by the French Ministry of Education and the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd).

To ensure compliance with international standards, the school is regularly inspected and experienced teachers are recruited mostly in France.

Its 12-year program after preschool prepares students for the French Baccalauréat, which is a passport to admission to European universities.

According to EFM headmaster Mireille Vincent, the curriculum aims to develop equal fluency in the French and English languages and mastery of German, Spanish and/or Mandarin, and a deep grasp of European culture.

She said that the school also emphasizes mathematics, sciences and modern technology, humanities, arts and social studies which are pillars of European societies.

Information and communication skills, which are key competencies in the 21st century, are also cultivated. Students take a three-level online test in grades 5, 8 and 11 to obtain an internationally-recognized certificate of proficiency. They also undergo training in road ethics, which is now required in most European countries when applying for a driving license.

International network

One advantage of EFM is its affiliation with the "Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger" (AEFE), the world's biggest network of educational institutions consisting of 429 schools in 125 countries. It allows students to move in different countries and to pursue studies under the same French educational system, which is recognized as among the world's best.

"These schools are noted for academic excellence that more than 160,000 students around the world receive, as well as for their openness to the languages and cultures of the host countries," Vincent said.

Language proficiency

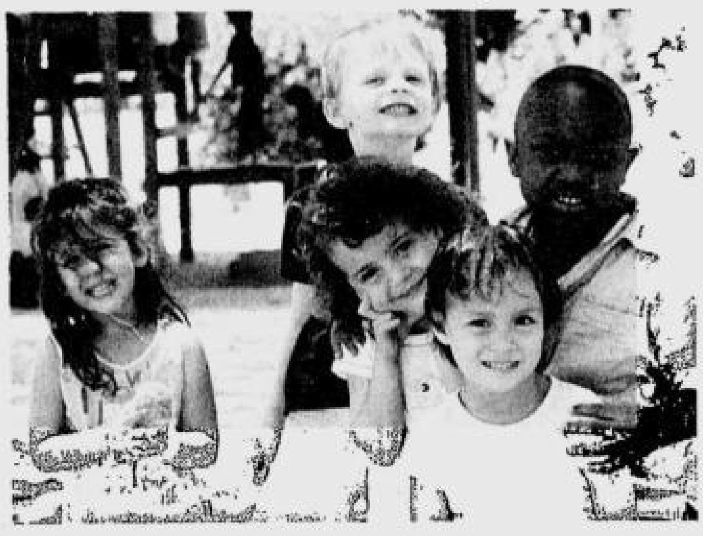
Cognizant of the need to effectively communicate in the global market, EFM recently launched a bilingual French and English program which takes effect at the start of the new school year this month.

This new scheme aims to help enhance students' proficiency in the English language.

As part of its integration with the rest of Europe, students take up German language starting Grade 6, Spanish starting Grade 8, and with an option to study Mandarin in Grade 11.

Well-rounded programs

The school promotes good citizenship through the election of student leaders, and visual arts and music, which are part of the curriculum.


ECOLE Française de Manille beckons to students from all walks of life who go for French education, lifestyle and culture early in their lives.

EFM also offers sporting activities such as swimming, rugby, soccer, basketball, volleyball, taekwondo, wall climbing and athletics to keep students active and physically fit.

Last summer, it hosted the Jeune Planete Rugby festival in line with the Rugby World Cup 2007 which will be held in Paris this month.

The event, which featured touch rugby demonstration games, was highlighted by the awarding of the Rugby World Cup tickets and round-trip Air France-KLM tickets to two EFM students who excel in the sport—Tom Felix and José Corpuz.

They will be part of the global team of 80 children which will play against French teams.

EFM also has extra-curricular activities such as mini-theater, pottery, ballet and jazz dance, cooking, and music which are offered in cooperation with its German school counterpart.

Students get involved in projects of non-government and community organizations as part of their outreach.

Grade 9 students, for instance, visit and observe local firms and various institutions. Afterwards, class forums are held to process their learning experiences to give them an understanding of the real world outside.

For more information on Ecole Française de Manille, call 776-1000, e-mail efm@eismanila.org or log on to eis-manila.org/EFM.

DonCarlosPalanca
Memorial Awards
for
LITERATURE

SENATOR Mar Roxas is conferred the Gawad Dangal ng Lahi during the 57th Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature. Roxas, the guest of honor and speaker, is flanked by Palanca chair Carlos Palanca III; Sylvia Palanca-Quirino, director of the Palanca Foundation; and Christine Quirino-Pacheco, deputy director.

ROGER MARGALLO

Filipino PR veterans tell success stories in new book

NINE SEASONED FILIPINO PUBLIC relations practitioners recall the highlights of their careers in a vivid memoir and how-to collection that helps part the curtain on a profession that is still scarcely understood as it is celebrated.

HOW TO MAKE IT IN PI

Edited by Romeo Virtusio, "How To Make It In PR: PR Veteran Tell Their Stories" will be launched formally on Sept. 19, 5 p.m. at Powerbooks Live! Greenbelt 4, Makati. The launch will be jointly sponsored by Context Communications International, Inc. the publisher, and the International Public Relations Association-Philippine Chapter.

The book that takes readers through the evolution of public relations in the country from the period covering the late 1950s to the present, "should be invaluable to young people contemplating a career in public relations," according to writer Butch Dalisay.

Each of second-generation PR pioneers Charlie A. Agatep, Joy L. Buensalido, Max J. Edralin, Rene E. Nieva, Pete A. Padre, Jr., Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, Frankie S. Roman, Oscar S. Villadolid, and Romeo P. Virtusio provide a personal account of their individual careers through engaging, sometimes amusing stories of various standout campaigns, the mentors they've learned from and the values they have lived by. The collection also features a foreword by former J. Walter Thompson chairman J.J. Calero who says, "A great wealth of experiences is contained in these pages. This book is recommended for anyone who is in the communications business."

Public Relations Society of the Philippines president Butch Raquel has called it "a rare document... of how the writers who are some of the best in our industry worked and have enriched the PR profession in our country."

Call 7265130, 7244774 or 8174471.

Call for papers for UST national conference in literature

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, declared a Center of Excellence in Literature Education by the Commission on Higher Education, will hold the national conference in literature, "Intersections – Crossroads and Crosscurrents in Literature and Culture," on Jan. 29-31, 2008 at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex.

Interested parties who wish to read papers may submit their abstracts of not more than 250 words, brief biographical information and contact details via cpdcs@mnl.ust.edu.ph not later than Sept. 30.

Papers will be grouped under the following headings: Literature and the Arts, Sciences, Languages, History, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Ethnicity, Sexuality, Gender, Pop Culture, Media, Religion, Technology, and Medicine.

Call 7417416 or 4061611 loc. 4051.

Filipino language teachers to hold seminar-workshop on curriculum

THE SANGGUNIAN SA Filipino (Sangfil) will hold a national seminar-workshop on current challenges in curriculum development on Oct. 25-26 at the National Institute for Science and Mathematics and Education Development (NISMED) in UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Sangfil is a broad association of teachers' groups in Filipino. The seminar-workshop aims to identify issues and problems related to the implementation of the present curriculum endorsed by the Commission of Higher Education and the Department of Education.

Teaching demonstration to be led by Jovy M. Peregrino of UP Diliman, Edison Fermin of Miriam College, and Ronan Capinding of Ateneo de Manila University will be part of the seminar-workshop.

Fax 924-4747 or 426-5838 or e-mail gemdanie@yahoo.com.

UE hosts work ethics forum

THE UE FORUM "WORK Ethics and Attitudes That Click," centered on right work values and attitudes and organized by the UE Guidance and Counseling Office is slated today, Sept. 17, at 10 a.m. at the UE Conference Hall, 4F, Dalupan Sr. Bldg.

Featured speaker is Francis J. Kong, one of the most sought-after speakers from the Asian Center for Trainers Speakers Bureau, an author of 11 books including the best selling "Only the Real Matters," an inspirational/motivational speaker, a successful entrepreneur and president of Business Matters, a non-stock, non-profit organization that seeks to make the Filipino sensitive to the rapid global changes and equip him with the values and skills to make him a positive contribution to Philippine progress. Kong also inspires daily listeners to "Business Matters," his daily radio program at 98.7 dzFE FM.

US-based UST medical alumni hold record-breaking reunion

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS Medical Alumni Association (USTMAAA) held its grand reunion and convention at the Wynn Hotel Resort & Casino in Las Vegas recently with a record-breaking attendance of over 1,200 members.

The new set of elected officers were headed by Dr. Filomeno C. Dante Gapultos Jr., president of the USTMAAA; Dr. Primo A. Andres Jr., president of the USTMAAA Foundation; Dr. Estella Evangelista, executive director; Dr. Antonio Gonzales, president, USTMAAA; and Dr. Zita Yorro, president-elect, USTMAAA Foundation.

In his inaugural address, Gapultos urged Thomasian medical alumni to give their strong support to their alma mater's charted course for the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and UST Hospital. Andres, on the other hand, stressed the expanding role of the foundation in Philippine nation-building.

The endowment fund of the USTMAAA has surpassed the US$3 million mark and only the interest income from the principal fund as approved by the board is disbursed for its projects such as scholarships, research, faculty development, materials improvements for UST, care of indigent patients of UST Hospital, and charitable causes to alleviate the condition of poor Filipinos.

THE UST Medical Alumni Association in America in Las Vegas reunion. (From left, seated): Dr. Aurora Gonzales, Sylvia Andres, Dr. Estella Evangelista; Dean Grace Gonzaga; UST Rector Fr. Ernesto Arceo, OP; Dr. Primo Andres; Dr. Zita Yorro, Melinda Tolentino and Margie Gapultos; (second row) Dr. Antonio Gonzaga, Dr. Placido Calimag, Dr. Oni Yorro, Dr. Noel Chua, Dr. José Evangelista, Dr. Greg Tolentino, Dr. Dante Gapultos and Dr. Noel Canlas

The five-day festivities were distinguished by the presence of the UST Rector Magnificus, Fr. Ernesto Arceo, OP; dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (UST-FMS), Dr. Grace Garayblas Gonzaga; and UST-FMS regent, Fr. Winston Cabading, OP. It was also highlighted by the Annual Luis Memorial Lecture, "Progress in Pediatric Surgery: A 50-year Evolution," given by prominent pediatric surgeon, Dr. Herman Reyes of Class '57.

The reunion was also celebrated by the Jubilarians, with spectacular presentations such as Golden, Class '57; Silver, Class '82; and Sapphire, Class '62 in the "Las Vegas Extravaganza." In the "Red, White & Blue Extravaganza" on Alumni Night Dinner Dance, the Ruby Class '67, Coral Class '72, and Pearl Class '77 were similarly honored.

WE ENJOY WHAT WE DO
AND IT SHOWS.

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IT'S ABOUT WORKING TWICE AS HARD.

THAT'S WHY WITH WHAT WE DO
WE HAVE A GOOD TIME TWICE OVER.

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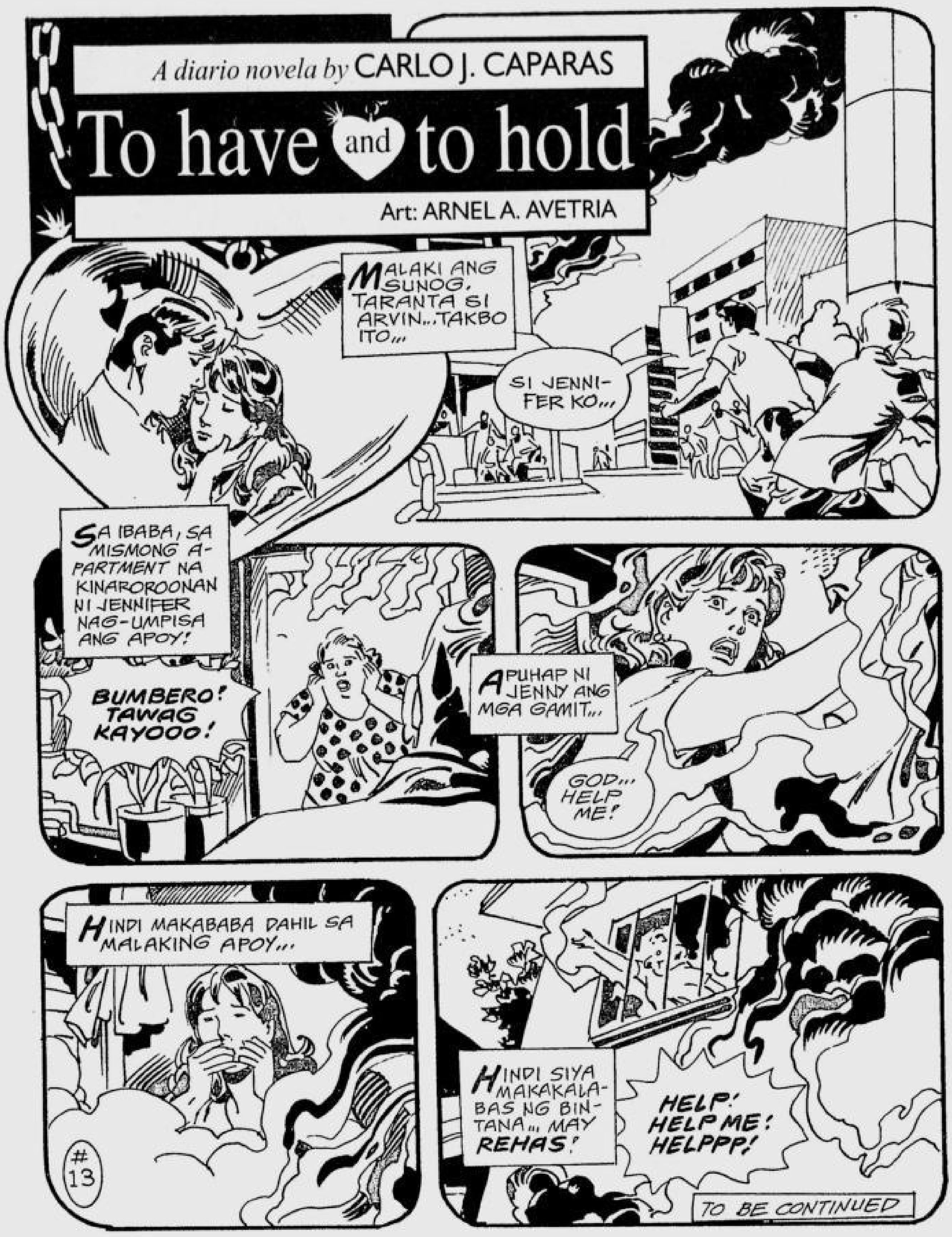
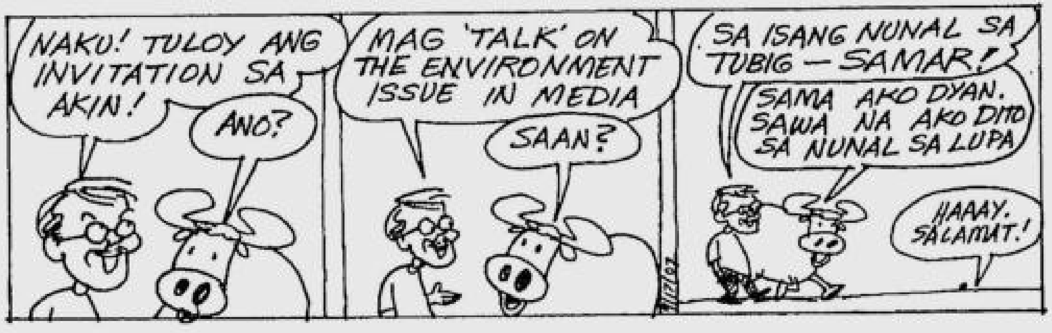
MAXUS MindShare


A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS
To have and to hold
Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA
MALAKI ANG SUNOG. TARANTA SI ARVIN...TAKBO ITO...
SI JENNIFER KO...
SA IBABA, SA MISMONG APARTMENT NA KINAROROONAN NI JENNIFER NAG-UMPISA ANG APOY!
BUMBERO! TAWAG KAYOOO!
APUHAP NI JENNY ANG MGA GAMIT...
GOD... HELP ME!
HINDI MAKABABA DAHIL SA MALAKING APOY...
#13
HINDI SIYA MAKAKALABAS NG BINTANA... MAY REHAS!
HELP! HELP ME! HELPPP!
TO BE CONTINUED

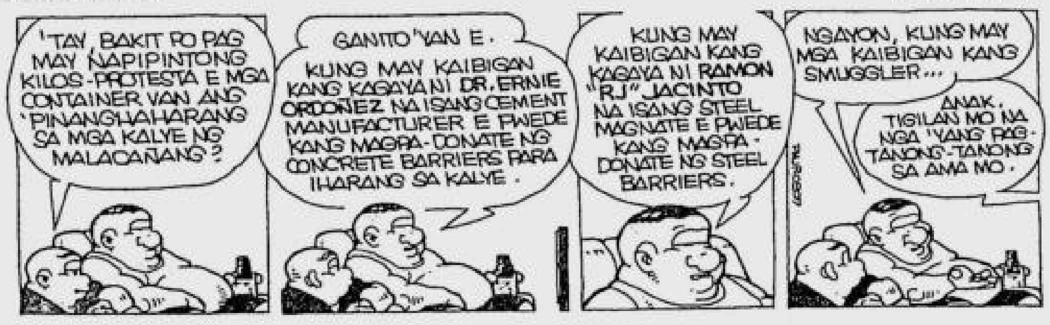
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAKU! TULOY ANG INVITATION SA AKIN!
ANO?
MAG 'TALK' ON THE ENVIRONMENT ISSUE IN MEDIA
SAAN?
SA ISANG NUNAL SA TUBIG — SAMAR!
SAMA AKO DYAN. SAWA NA AKO DITO SA NUNAL SA LUPA
HAAAY. SALAMAT!

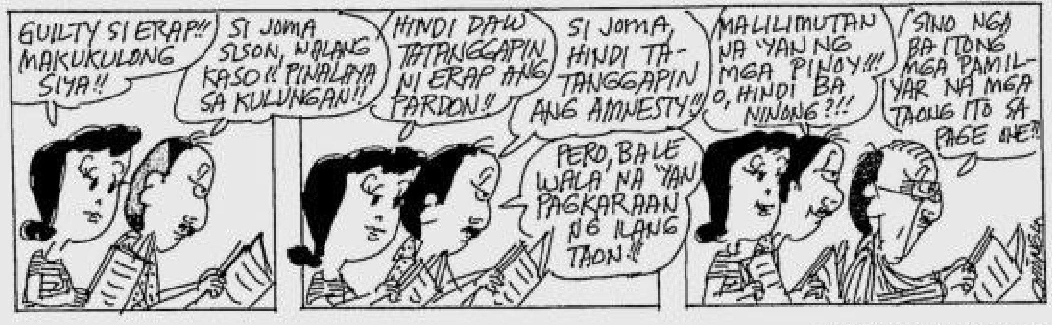
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'TAY, BAKIT PO PAG MAY NAPIPINTONG KILOS-PROTESTA E MGA CONTAINER VAN ANG 'PINANGHAHARANG SA MGA KALYE NG MALACAÑANG?
GANITO 'YAN E.
KUNG MAY KAIBIGAN KANG KAGAYA NI DR. ERNIE ORDOÑEZ NA ISANG CEMENT MANUFACTURER E PWEDE KANG MAGPA-DONATE NG CONCRETE BARRIERS PARA IHARANG SA KALYE.
KUNG MAY KAIBIGAN KANG KAGAYA NI RAMON "RJ" JACINTO NA ISANG STEEL MAGNATE E PWEDE KANG MAGPA-DONATE NG STEEL BARRIERS.
NGAYON, KUNG MAY MGA KAIBIGAN KANG SMUGGLER...
ANAK, TIGILAN MO NA NGA 'YANG PAGTANONG-TANONG SA AMA MO.

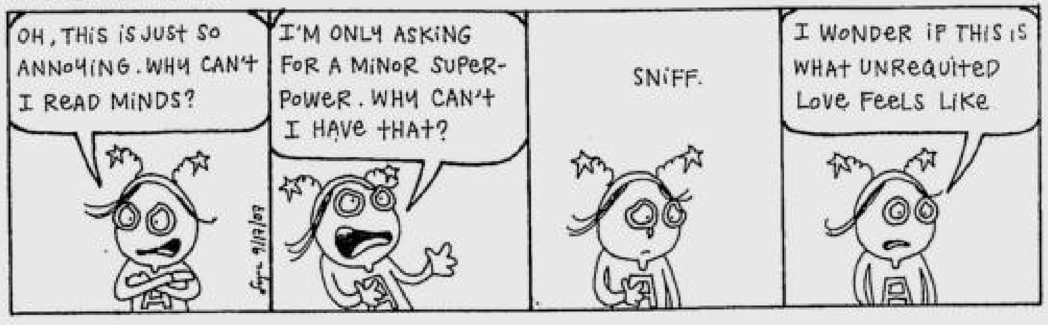
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


GUILTY SI ERAP!! MAKUKULONG SIYA!!
SI JOMA SISON, WALANG KASO!! PINALAYA SA KULUNGAN!!
HINDI DAW TATANGGAPIN NI ERAP ANG PARDON!!
SI JOMA, HINDI TATANGGAPIN ANG AMNESTY!!
PERO, BALE WALA NA 'YAN PAGKARAAN NG ILANG TAON!!
MALILIMUTAN NA 'YAN NG MGA PINOY!!! O, HINDI BA NINONG?!!
SINO NGA BA ITONG MGA PAMILYAR NA MGA TAONG ITO SA PAGE ONE?!

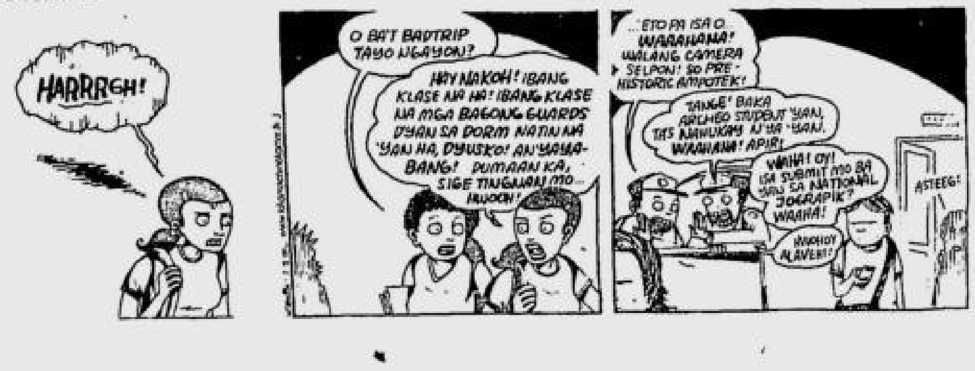
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

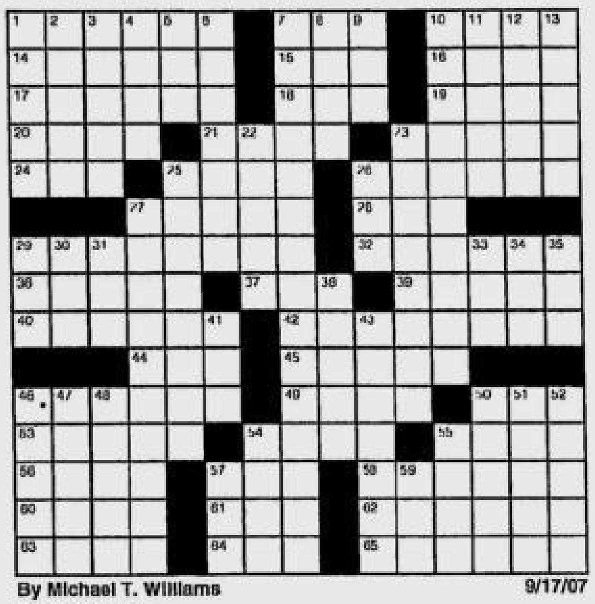

OH, THIS IS JUST SO ANNOYING. WHY CAN'T I READ MINDS?
I'M ONLY ASKING FOR A MINOR SUPERPOWER. WHY CAN'T I HAVE THAT?
SNIFF.
I WONDER IF THIS IS WHAT UNREQUITED LOVE FEELS LIKE

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HARRRGH!
O BA'T BADTRIP TAYO NGAYON?
HAY NAKOH! IBANG KLASE NA HA! IBANG KLASE NA MGA BAGONG GUARDS DYAN SA DORM NATIN NA 'YAN HA, DYUSKO! AN'YAYABANG! DUMAAN KA, SIGE TINGNAN MO... HUOOH!
...'ETO PA ISA O... WARAHAHA! WALANG CAMERA SELPON! SO PREHISTORIC AMPOTEK!
TANGE! BAKA ARCHEO STUDENT 'YAN, TAS NAHUKAY NIYA 'YAN. WAHAHA! APIR!
WAHA! OY! ISA SUBMIT MO BA 'YAN SA NATIONAL JOGRAPIK? WAHA!
HAHOY ALAVER!
ASTEEG!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Michael T. Williams
Clearwater, FL

9/17/07

ACROSS

1 Improper handler
7 Chewy treat
10 Homer's boy
14 Thread: pref.
15 Balin or Claire
16 Frankenstein's gofer
17 Scowls
18 Beam of light
19 Highway channel
20 Ingrid in "Casablanca"
21 Citizens' rights org.
23 Mouse press
24 Dawn goddess
25 Brothers' titles
26 Thick-skinned mammals
27 Existence
28 Afore
29 Pasta
32 Vijay Singh, e.g.
36 Warning signal
37 French sculptor
39 French legislative body
40 Elbowed
42 Colorful shrubs
44 Tiny colonist
45 "Lady of __"
46 Skins' hoops opponents
49 Stare stupidly
50 Baled forage
53 Alther and Kudrow
54 Desire
55 Wait patiently
56 Surface size
57 Drinks counter
58 Steak picks
60 Composer Jerome
61 Unkindly
62 Control
63 Early garden
64 __ Moines, IA
65 Potts and Lennox

DOWN

1 Rolling Stones hit
2 Handsome in Bologna
3 New England sch.
4 Starship hit
5 Burgundy summer
6 Dawson of "Clerks II"
7 Motley Crue hit
8 Two-toed sloth
9 Merry month?
10 Michael Jackson hit
11 Once more
12 Popeil company
13 Arduous journeys
22 Tropical plant with brilliant flowers
23 Dame Agatha
25 Reacts to yeast
26 Sports off.
27 Beach Boys hit
29 U.S. Army rank
30 Tenn. neighbor
31 Dancer Calloway
33 Quaint quarters
34 Drivers' org.
35 PMs
38 Family men
41 Sot's shakes
43 Flammable solvent
46 Quench, as thirst
47 Employed
48 Val d'__, Fr.
50 Language of northern India
51 Dancer Astaire
52 Affirmatives
54 Corduroy feature
55 Rhine port
57 Auction call
59 Prohibit

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	E	R	P	A	S	■	D	O	G	S	T	A	R
H	O	L	E	O	U	T	■	I	R	A	T	E	L	Y
E	M	E	R	I	T	A	■	N	E	B	U	L	A	E
D	E	V	I	S	O	R	■	S	O	L	D	E	R	S
■	■	■	D	O	M	E	S	■	S	E	I	S	M	■
S	E	R	E	N	A	D	E	R	■	D	E	C	C	A
P	R	E	S	E	T	■	G	A	S	■	S	O	L	D
O	A	S	■	R	O	W	■	P	T	A	■	P	O	I
O	D	O	R	■	N	A	N	■	E	N	R	I	C	O
L	I	N	E	D	■	F	O	R	E	D	E	C	K	S
■	C	A	P	E	S	■	S	I	R	E	D	■	■	■
S	A	T	R	A	P	S	■	P	A	R	A	D	E	S
O	T	O	O	L	E	S	■	O	B	S	C	U	R	E
F	E	R	V	E	N	T	■	S	L	O	T	C	A	R
A	S	S	E	R	T	S	■	T	E	N	S	E	S	T

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9/17/07

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	6			1			3	2
4			2	7				1
			3					
	5	8		3				
7	9		1		6		2	5
				9		1	4	
					9			
2				5	1			3
6	8			2			9	

Difficulty Level ★

9/17

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Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	8	1	6	3	4	2	9
9	6	4	8	2	7	1	5	3
2	1	3	5	9	4	7	8	6
3	2	7	9	8	6	5	1	4
4	5	1	3	7	2	6	9	8
8	9	6	4	5	1	2	3	7
6	8	2	7	3	5	9	4	1
7	4	9	2	1	8	3	6	5
1	3	5	6	4	9	8	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

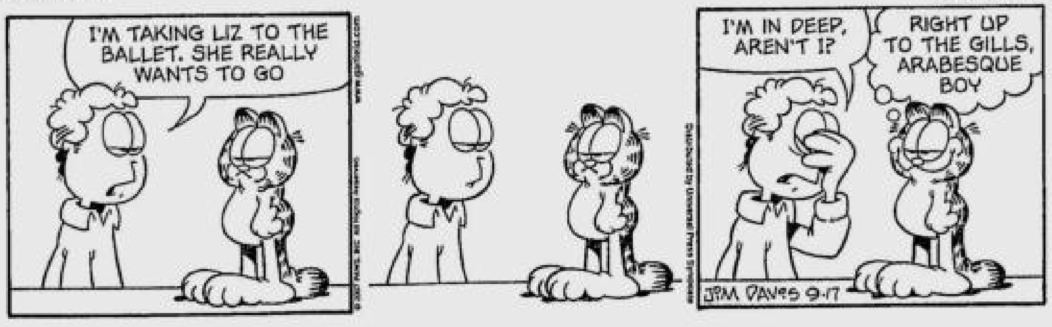
9/16

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I'M TAKING LIZ TO THE BALLET. SHE REALLY WANTS TO GO
I'M IN DEEP, AREN'T I?
RIGHT UP TO THE GILLS, ARABESQUE BOY
JIM DAVIS 9-17

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very thorough. Very little misses your attention. You're independent and bright, and you like to stay current with what's happening in the world. You have wonderful powers of concentration. You're quite private about your feelings. Many of you are experts in your field. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life. Grab your power. Dream big!

Birthdate of: Sir Stirling Moss, race-car driver; Ken Kesey, author; Phil Jackson, NBA coach.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're feisty, and you rise to every challenge. Today you feel the need to make others agree with you about something at work. Go gently.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might have a heated discussion with someone about money, cash flow, financial situations or possessions you own. You feel you have to defend your position about something.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have lots of energy today! You're coming on strong with everyone you meet. However, you might be coming on too strong for some people. (Think about this.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be unconsciously angry and not even know it. Or perhaps you do know it. Either way, acknowledge to yourself what you're unhappy about. This will help.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Clashes with friends or groups are likely today because you can't reach an agreement about something. In truth, people are looking for a fight today. Be careful!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone might challenge you about a decision you made roughly six months ago. People are looking for flaws in your ideas. This puts you on the defensive—but be calm.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Resist the urge to win arguments about politics, religion or racial issues. You can't win. You will only encourage more opposition. (Wait for another time.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have a lot of pent-up energy within you today. Try to do something physical or get outside for a walk so that you can clear your mind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Ego conflicts with others are highly likely today. Fiery Mars is at odds with the energy of the Sun. Postpone important discussions for another day.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Something you might have said or done about six months ago might be tested by others today. People are looking for chinks in your armor. You'll have to do your homework.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't get excited when dealing with children today. People are bouncing off the walls due to the energy in the air. Similarly, be patient with romantic connections.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Family arguments can explode easily today. Avoid this by not tempting the fates. Be pleasant to others. Postpone dealing with touchy subjects.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2007
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE

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PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

Quiapo and the Filipino: Not exotic enough?

REMAINING useful in the 21st century, old Quiapo residences are reused for commercial purposes.

FERNANDO NAKPIL ZIALCITA, A true Manileño from Quiapo, heads the Cultural Heritage Studies Program at the Ateneo de Manila University while being deeply involved in Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, his family's 1914 landmark house in the heart of Quiapo, now a museum and community center.

A respected authority in the study of Philippine culture, his two recently published books, "Quiapo: Heart of Manila" and "Authentic though Not Exotic," are companion pieces that attempt to understand the casual, belittling Filipino regard toward the value of his culture and heritage.

In "Quiapo: Heart of Manila," Zialcita looks at Philippine heritage from the perspective of an inner Manila resident who has devoted years of effort to the revitalization of the district of his birth.

Quiapo was a riverside suburb south of Manila (then confined mostly to Intramuros) in the 19th century that rose to prominence as the "city's heartland in the 20th century," always at the center of Manila activity.

Various writers bring out the uniqueness of Quiapo as an urban district and its transformation into what it is today. Still Manila's central business area of crowded shopping areas and department stores, streets specializing in particular products (flowers, music, photography, optical goods, folk medicine, wedding supplies, dressmakers' notions, and so much more) radiate from grand Quezon Boulevard and from Quiapo Church at Plaza Miranda.

It is a pilgrimage center. "Outside the [Quiapo] church is the world of Plaza Miranda, the very center of magic in the entire country," while outside the mosque is the national center of pirated videos.

"Quiapo has its flavors, too: a crunchy version of fresh *lumpia*, a tangy ham, and *halo-halo*."

The neighborhood is absolutely fascinating. Compact and highly complex, it surprises visitors with its wide range of multitextured, multicultural offerings. It is also where people from all walks of life continue to live within close contact of each other. How interesting it is that Quiapo has never lost its sense of being a neighborhood.

The district is what urbanists call an ensemble, a place that offers its residents all the services needed for their daily lives—work places, shops, markets, entertainment, schools, universities, places of worship and places of mysticism—all within walking distance.

Much of Quiapo has fallen into total disrepair. Its riverine network of streams, developed into *esteros* in the early 20th century, is now hopelessly clogged into stagnant pools.

People and vehicles congest what once were grand avenues and leafy streets. Hawkers illegally convert the few remaining open spaces into makeshift markets.

Houses, whether splendid mansions of the wealthy or modest working-class dwellings, continually deteriorate into dilapidation, many dismantled and substituted with cheap commercial architecture that degrades the heritage houses they have replaced.

Urban lesson

Quiapo, now bursting at its seams, has morphed into an overpopulated city center district with all the attendant web of social, economic and urban problems, each demanding immediate solution.

Quiapo is an urban lesson that builds upon the maxim that nothing remains the same. There is no room in present Quiapo reality for introducing romantic Intramuros-type conservation or restoration plans. With the economic, social and cultural pace of Quiapo today, old Quiapo, or even the Quiapo of just 30 years ago, is now memory that cannot ever return.

"Quiapo: Heart of Manila" documents the district, outlines its history, brings out its strengths, establishes its uniqueness among urban neighborhoods in the Philippines, and asks questions that must be answered to arrest urban and social degeneration any further.

Admittedly, much work is needed by the government and, most importantly, its residents to slowly breathe new air into rheumatic Quiapo, to resuscitate it into a community that responds to the present and future needs of its residents, while also upgrading its economic, social and cultural image in a way that can be sustained by 21st-century living.

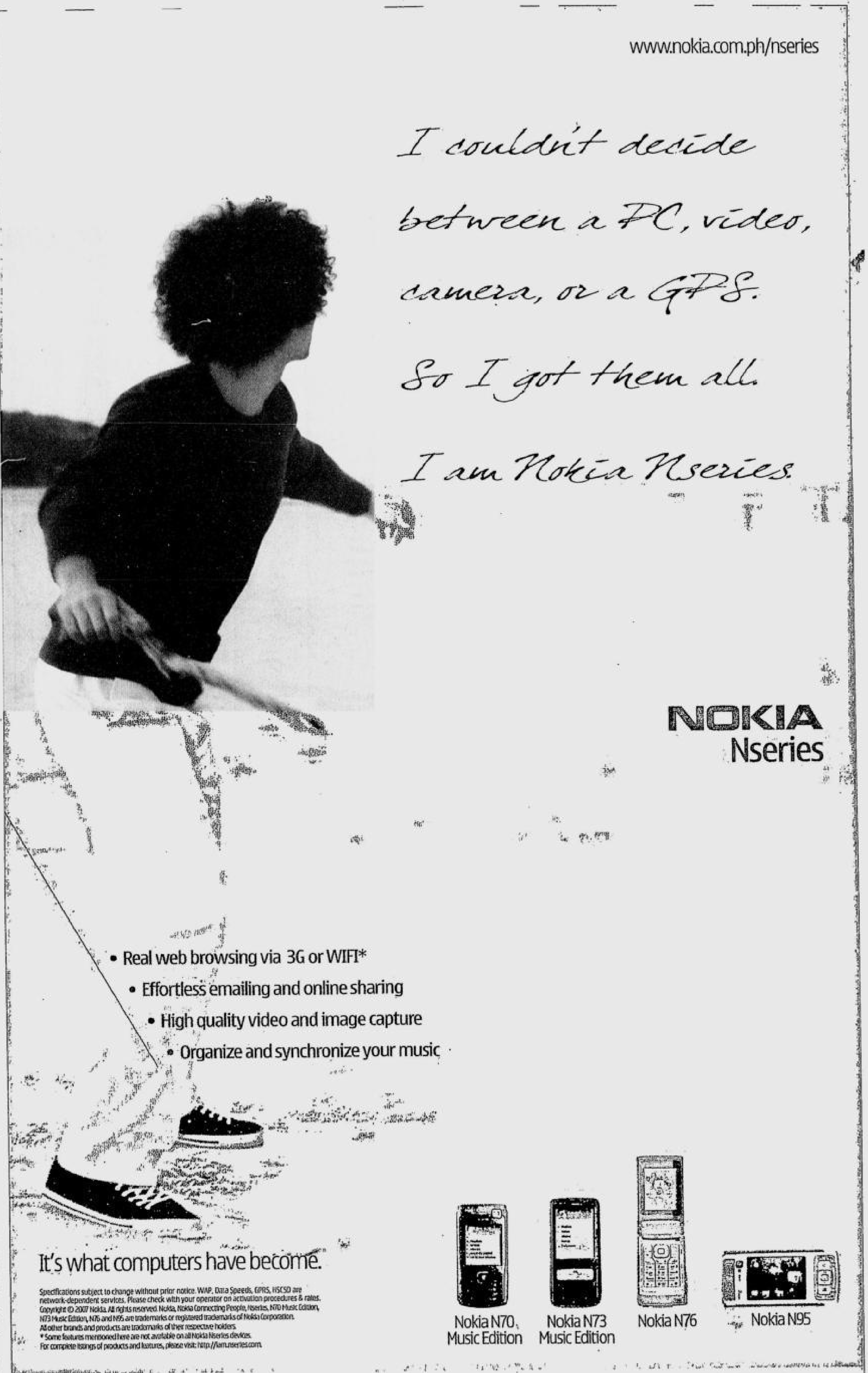
What cultural images are we looking for? This is the question asked by Zialcita in "Authentic though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity."

We have no vast temple complexes like Angkor in Cambodia or pre-Columbian pyramids like those built by the Maya at Copán in Honduras. Neither do we have an Eiffel Tower, a St. Peter's Basilica, or a Parthenon as monumental symbols of cultural achievement.

Living monument

But we do have the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera, an immense system of

QUIAPO/ E2



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La Naval memorabilia on exhibit

NUESTRA Señora del Rosario, La Naval de Manila

SCAPULARIO de Tercera Orden, circa 1920s, and prayer leaflet, 1950s.

FRAME with *nakar* shells and a period *estampita* of La Naval.

THE MUSEO DE STO. DOMINGO OF Sto. Domingo Church and Convent in Quezon City is mounting the grand exhibit "La Naval Memorabilia Exhibit," which opens on Sept. 29. The exhibit is a fitting tribute to Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila on the centenary of her canonical coronation.

It is the last in a series of eight exhibitions which began in 2006 to commemorate the centennial. At the launching of the celebrations last year, the first exhibit, "La Virgencita Maria," essayed the incipient devotion to the child Mary in the Philippines. It was followed by "Salve Regina," which featured the various Marian images in the Philippines which have been canonically crowned.

Last December, the exhibit "Venite Adoremus" focused on the very popular devotion to the Sto. Niño as depicted in various art forms such as prints and carvings in wood and ivory and the many titles of the Christ Child in Philippine popular religiosity.

In March 2007, a back-to-back exhibit was mounted to honor St. Joseph, husband of Mary, in "San Jose, Esposo de la Virgen" and "Misterios Dolorosos," which featured various depictions of the suffering Christ coinciding with the season of Lent and Eastertide.

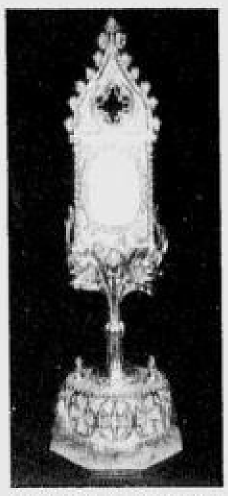
The sixth exhibit was organized last month to honor the saint of the rosary, "Sto. Domingo de Guzman." The exhibit focused on the life of St. Dominic and also included sculptures, prints and paintings of other famous saints of the Order of Preachers.

The penultimate exposition opened last Sept. 8, feast of Mary's Nativity, and is still running at the Santisimo Rosario Parish of the University of Santo Tomas Campus in España, Manila, where the venerated image of La Naval stayed for a while during the war. The exhibit features some rare photographs and prints of the virgin during its stay in UST and different images of the Santo Rosario as it evolved through the years.

The grand memorabilia exhibit will open on Sept. 29 and will run through the end of October. According to Fr. Ferdinand Bautista, OP, it was in 1907 when the venerated image of the Holy Rosary was crowned amid the rejoicing of the Filipino people. Our Lady of La Naval was the very first image honored with a canonical coronation by Pope Pius X.

FR. BIENVENIDO Trinilla, OP, prior of Sto. Domingo Convent

REI Nicolas, curator


GOTHIC portapaz in gilded wood and ivory. Courtesy of Rei Nicolas

> The exhibit caps the series of expositions organized in the run-up to the centennial of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary in October

The grand exposition will feature various La Naval Memorabilia from the collection of curator Rei Nicolas, who has been collecting devotional materials about the La Naval since the 1980s.

A very rare *programa y recterdo* of the 1907 Coronation was acquired by Nicolas from the Makati Cinema Square's *segunda-mano* shops. A more recent find is a scapular of the Third Order of St. Dominic (circa 1900), which he found in an antique shop in Cubao, QC.

Commemorative medals are also included in the articles to be exhibited. An added attraction of this exhibit are some of the gifts given by the devotees and benefactors of the Señora de La Naval.

Paintings and artworks depicting the La Naval done by famous artists like Federico Alcuaz and the late Cenon Rivera of UST will be shown.

Production designers Chito Sumera and Gino Marasigan have also loaned their La Naval prints and framed images for the exhibit.

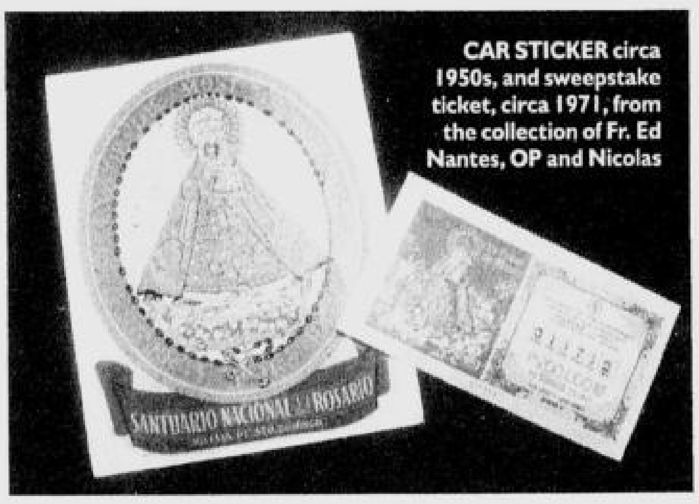
The other members of the exhibit team are Tom Joven, Jerome de Jesus, Noel Abquilan and Jun Manahan.

In charge of research is Bro. Christopher Garinganao, OP and assisted by Bro. Ariel Salcedo, OP.

Invited to open the grand exhibit are Jaime Laya, Charo Santos, Boots Anson Roa and Ben Farrales.

Tenor Rheez Chua will render songs dedicated to Our Lady.

Fr. Larry Singian, OP, vicar provincial of the Dominican province of the Philippines, will be assisted by Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, OP, chair of the centennial celebration committee, and Fr. Bienvenido Trinilla, OP, prior of Santo Domingo Convent, in opening the exhibit.



CAR STICKER circa 1950s, and sweepstake ticket, circa 1971, from the collection of Fr. Ed Nantes, OP and Nicolas

Quiapo and the Filipino . . .

From page E1

rice paddies carved into steep mountain slopes considered by world conservation experts as a monument on the scale of Angkor.

What sets the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera on a different level from extraordinary but empty Angkor is that it is a living monument that continues to support life and is used today for the same purpose that it was built over a millennium ago.

A site definitely of outstanding universal value that Unesco inscribed on the World Heritage List and admired worldwide, many Filipinos routinely dismiss it.

Zialcita observes that the world does not find the lowland Christian Filipino fitting the stereotyped Western image for an Asian people. Therefore, we do not seem "exotic" enough, he writes, to the Westerner expecting to find "mysterious" Asia in Chinese, Japanese or Thai cultures that appear, in Western consciousness, to be out of the ordinary.

Out of the ordinary are the tribal cultures, the rice terraces, the Maranaos who dance the *singkil*, the seafaring Badjao. Tribal architecture, carving and weaving which "qualify" as Asian and exotic. Lowland crafts like the delicately woven *piña*, religious carving that combines Filipino with Western styles, or traditional Filipino cuisine that fuses the local palate with Chinese and Spanish influences, are simply regarded as derivative of the West.

Zialcita examines the effects of Spanish colonialism on the present Filipino psyche, responds to the "accusation that lowland Filipino culture is 'elitist and derivative,' …examines appeals to joining 'Asia' and 'Southeast Asia,' showing that though we should participate in both, we should realize that both concepts were invented by Westerners whose content tends to exclude Westernized peoples like us."

CROWDED Quinta Market, among the largest city markets, is a landmark in Manila's premier shopping district.

QUIAPO streets, filled with shops and hawkers, attract people from all walks of Manila life.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY houses, while struggling to survive, remind of Quiapo's past as the residential quarter for the city elite.

Establishing a strong Filipino identity in today's global village is what Zialcita advocates. His thoughts on how to achieve that recognition make "Authentic though Not Exotic" an extremely interesting read.

"Quiapo: Heart of Manila" is published by the Cultural Heritage Studies Program of Ateneo de Manila and the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, assisted with grants from the Toyota Foundation, Beatriz Susana Zobel de Ayala, and Gregorio Araneta Social Development Foundation.

"Authentic though Not Exotic" is published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, a museum open to the public on 432 Bautista St. off Quezon Boulevard, is definitely worth visiting. For information, call 7349341.

E-mail comments to pride.place@gmail.com

More than furniture

MORE THAN A CHAIR MAY seem to be mere words that however would tickle your curiosity. But more curious would be the furniture products displayed in the MTAC showroom at Petron Lakeshore on North Luzon Expressway near the exit to Mexico, Pampanga.

More Than a Chair (MTC) showroom has become a familiar site to shoppers and motorists. But to furniture lovers and enthusiasts, MTC is a showcase of classy chairs and furniture.

MTC has a touch both foreign and local. The craftsmanship is inspired by French consultant David Giraudet, who trained the first group of workers in 1999. The skills have been passed on and cultivated since then so the style has been preserved and even improved.

Why More Than a Chair? The name was given by Myrna Bituin.

Jose Butuin explained: "Simply because we got more than it takes , more than just ability and skills to make classy furniture and more than our commitment to product excellence."

The company has a team of experienced and high-caliber workers who live by the MTC commitment. The prices of the furniture products are reasonable and well within the reach even of middle-class Filipinos. The furniture are proudly locally made, with the best design and quality, fit for homes, hotels and offices.

"MTC designs according to specified style and form clients choose. That could be the reason why they keep coming to us because we please them and they are satisfied with our products." said Cherry Bituin, marketing head.

The company's strength is its modern design and craftsmanship, using natural materials such as bamboo Z-matt, hand caning and the like.

MTC begun as a sub-contractor for its mother company, Betis Crafts, Inc.

In 1999 MTC joined the Philippine International Furniture Show. The experience opened the door to the world market, and before long foreign clients begun coming in.

It will join the "Manila Now" exhibit in March 2008.

MTC also caters to the local market. It is always ready and able to supply high-quality, innovative and competitively priced furniture.

MTC is committed to make quality products based on buyers' specifications. Its corporate environment is based on career growth, profitability, sense of ownership, teamwork and adaptability to change.

MORE than a Chair showroom at Petron Lakeshore on North Luzon Expressway

Celebration of form

By Johnathan Libarios Rondina
Contributor

"I AM NOT A GLASS ARTIST."

These words would not have been as shocking had they not come from Ramon Orlina, an artist much acclaimed here and abroad for his luminous works in translucent glass.

"I am a sculptor," he is quick to add, implying that artists are best defined by what they do rather than what medium they use.

Orlina's revelation is received with great amusement by his fellow sculptors at a recent gathering to discuss their forthcoming exhibit, "Forces of Form," opening at the Megamall Art Center on Sept. 21. The annual exhibit, now on its third year, is presented by Gallery Nine and is envisioned as a review of contemporary sculpture in the Philippines.

Apart from his signature glass pieces, Orlina will showcase new works in bronze, an interesting departure that highlights the artist's breadth and proves his point about reductionist conceptions of art and artists based on medium.

"Review expositions are important," he says, "to show an artist's development, *kung mayroon nga ba o wala.*"

Other participating artists in the review include Napoleon Abueva, Arturo Luz, Bencab, Ed Castrillo, Solomon Saprid, Claude Tayag, Michael Cacnio, Carlito Ortega, Robert Odejar, Rey Paz Contreras, Juan Sajid Imao, Roger Basco, Daniel de la Cruz and Egai Fernandez.

Art of form

As such, the show is meant as much for the public as it is for the growing community of Filipino sculptors whose collaborative engagements have so far been few and far between.

At the exhibit, the works of seasoned as well as emerging sculptors and installation artists working with a wide array of media—from glass to metal, brass to bronze, wood to scrap and other found materials—will be showcased and are certain to elicit well-deserved admiration for the wealth of Filipino talent engaged in the art of form.

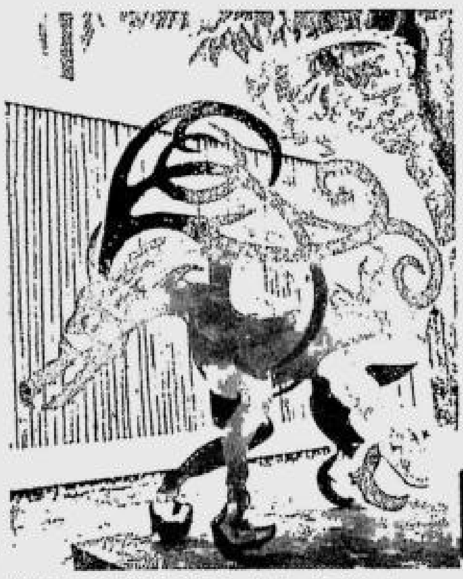
For other sculptors working with brass like Cacnio and Ortega, the annual review is an opportunity to take roads less taken. Cacnio's very memorable contribution to last year's exhibit, an exasperated angel whose outstretched wings revealed the burden of its fate, was a stark contrast to his idyllic renderings of innocent children at play.

Cacnio, a Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of the Philippines awardee, sees the review as a breeding ground for his more conceptually political works. This year, his critical hands have given life to similarly arresting pieces that focus on Filipino resiliency and humor amidst the great socioeconomic divide.

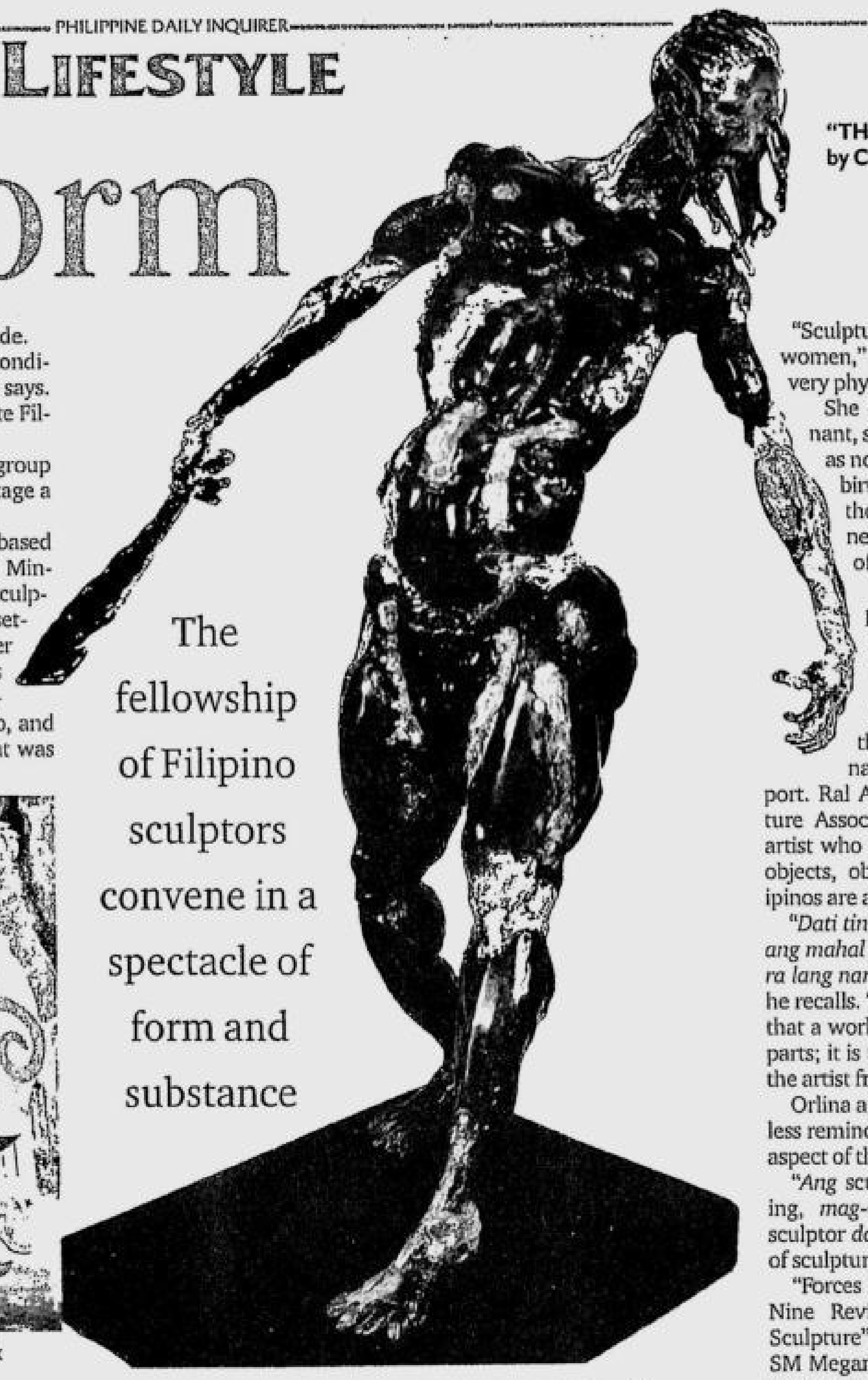
"I want to focus on the qualities and conditions that make us who we are," Cacnio says. "At the same time, I also want to celebrate Filipino talent and achievement."

Apart from his contribution to the group show, the sculptor is also scheduled to stage a solo exhibit in Brussels this week.

Ortega, a Bukidnon-born artist now based in San Pablo, Laguna, forays into the Mindanao of his youth and renders in his sculptures a fitting homage to the migrant settlers who cultivated the southern frontier in the first half of the 1900s. The brass works of nude figures depict the oft-used historical allusions to the axe, bolo, and carabao as instruments for taming what was then touted as the "Promised Land."

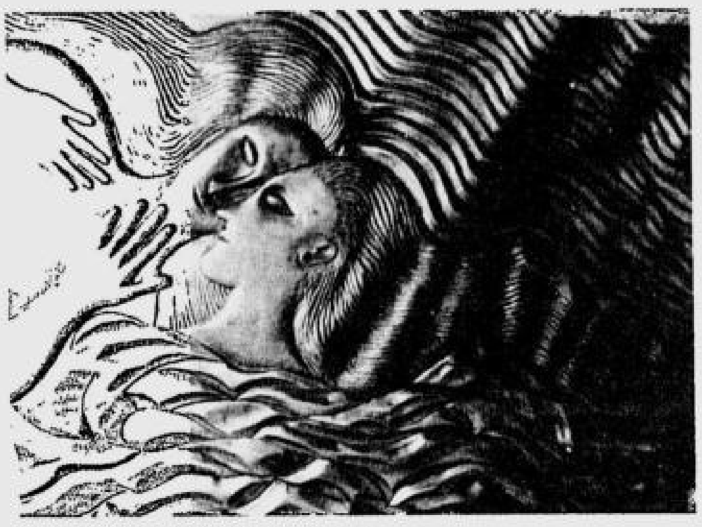


"DRAGONWINGS," by Ruby Katigbak



"THE PIONEER," by Carlito Ortega

The fellowship of Filipino sculptors convene in a spectacle of form and substance



"WOODWOMEN," by Grace Taylor

Ortega is an entrepreneur-architect-turned-sculptor whose shift to the arts began only a couple of years ago. He now confesses to an evolving love affair with brass.

"Brass is so forgiving; your mistakes are almost always forgiven." he says. "*Kung saan ako dadalhin ng* brass, *doon ako pupunta.*"

Women sculptors

For the other sculptors, the show is a cathartic exercise for personal recollection. Agnes Arellano, a sculptress who belongs to a very small sisterhood of Filipina artists engaged in sculpture, revives her Eshu goddess for the exhibit.

The sculpture-installation, first exhibited at the Havana Biennale 10 years ago, will be juxtaposed against her new works in bronze, signaling the aesthetic as well as personal shifts in her 25-year career in art.

"Sculpture is much more difficult for women," Arellano explains, "because it is very physical."

She recalls that when she was pregnant, she was "sculpting rhythmically, so as not to upset the baby." The rituals of birthing and the many odysseys of the feminine spirit thus figure prominently in Arellano's works and that of her women peers.

Aside from Arellano, the other participating women sculptors include Tala Isla Contreras, Grace Taylor and Ruby Katigbak.

The increase in submissions for this year's exhibit is a telling sign that sculpture in the country is a dynamic discipline with growing support. Ral Arrogante, president of the Sculpture Association of the Philippines and an artist who uses scrap metal and other found objects, observes that more and more Filipinos are appreciating three-dimensional art.

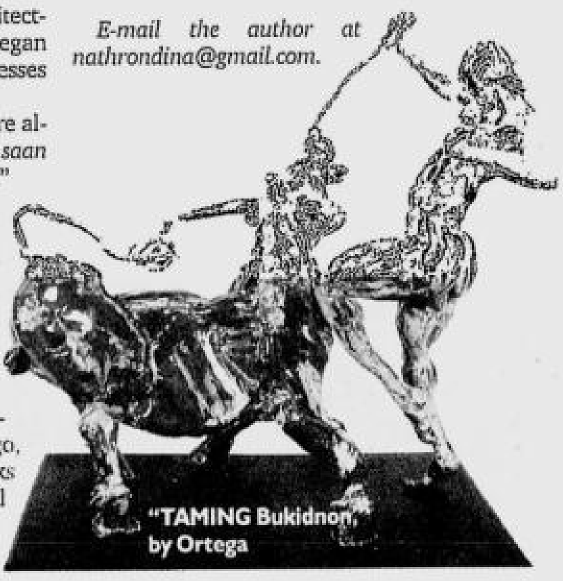
"*Dati tinatanong ako ng iba kung bakit daw ang mahal ng* works *ko samantalang ang mura lang naman daw ng* materials *na ginamit,*" he recalls. "But now, more people understand that a work of art is more than the sum of its parts; it is the creative idea that distinguishes the artist from the artisan."

Orlina agrees with Arrogante but nevertheless reminds younger sculptors to know every aspect of their craft.

"*Ang* sculptor *dapat marunong mag-*welding, *mag-*carpentry, *lahat,*" he says. "*Ang* sculptor *dapat* Jack-of-all trades, *pero* master of sculpture."

"Forces of Form: The 3rd Annual Gallery Nine Review of Philippine Contemporary Sculpture" opens Sept. 21 in Art Space, 4/L, SM Megamall, and runs through Oct. 7. Call 9108016.

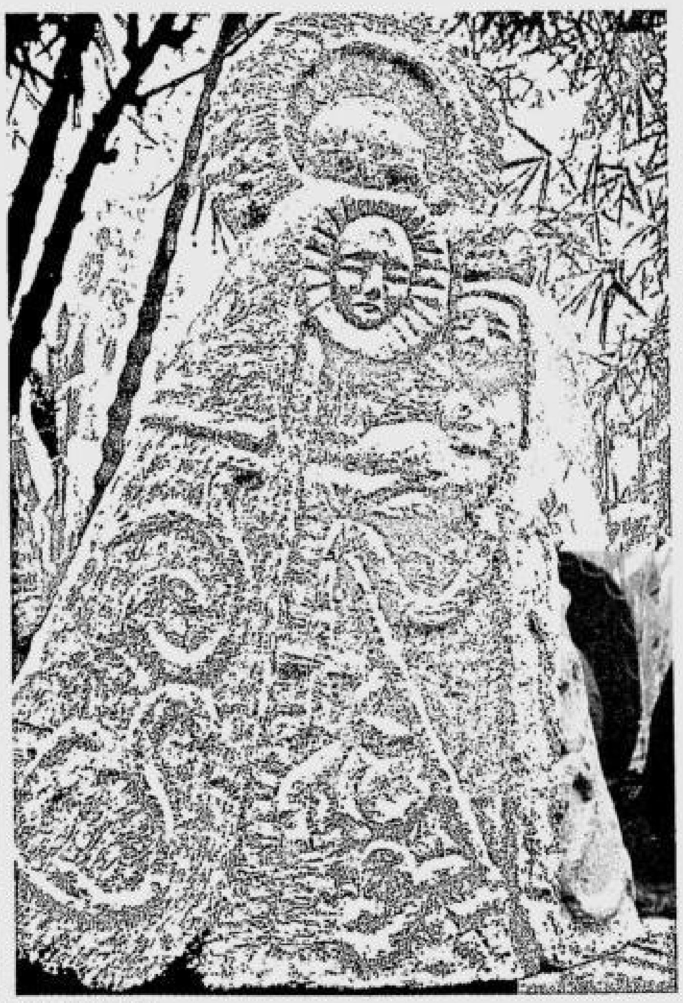
E-mail the author at nathrondina@gmail.com.



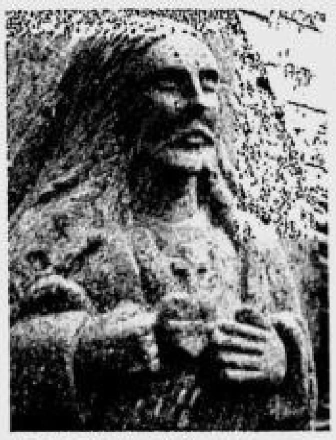
"TAMING Bukidnon," by Ortega

Tender Mother . . .

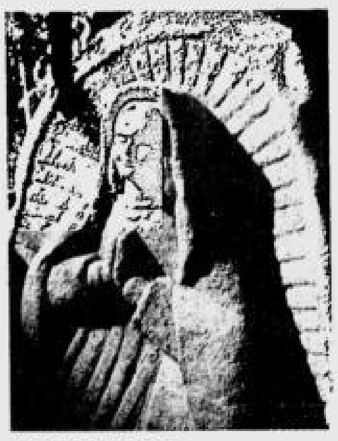
From page E4



"MANAOAG"



"SACRED Heart"



"GUADALUPE"

Community program

So I started a community project at our weekend farm to help him out. My simple goal was to develop Ave's talents as a stone artisan, by challenging him to refine his skills to create new designs, and helping develop a bigger market for these garden sculptures in Manila.

We decided our focus should be Marian images. Because we are a Catholic country, I believe every home with a garden should have the image of Mama Mary. Just as Thai gardens are adorned with the image of Buddha, Japanese gardens with pagodas, and Chinese gardens with stone lion-dogs, I believe ours should be adorned with the image of Our Lady.

In March 2007, I showed our early works to one of the founding members of Friends in Art (Fiat), Inc. She was excited by what she saw, and decided to show pictures of our works to her organization.

Fiat members remarked on the tenderness in the sculptured faces of Our Lady. "Her smile is captured in stone," they said. Fiat invited us to produce at least 30 pieces to be featured in their annual "Ave Maria" show on Sept. 8.

Personal tribute

This endeavor, I thought, will allow me to pay personal tribute to Our Lady.

My wife, Milagros, has had a debilitating brain injury for close to 11 years now. She is completely paralyzed, and has lost her ability to speak. Like an infant, she is completely dependent on the people around her for all her needs. In spite of the severity of her brain injury, she is fully aware of everything around her.

Mila is living proof that miracles do happen. She was born when her mother Martita was 45, and already had three miscarriages before her. When Martita found out she was pregnant with Mila, her doctor told her that, at her age and with her medical history, she should not get her hopes up on her pregnancy.

So she prayed to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, for her safety and the health of the child in her womb. Mila surprised all by being born at full term, perfectly normal and healthy. In thanksgiving, her mother named her Milagros.

AVE'S Portrait

When Mila gave birth to her own daughter on Oct. 20, 1996, she unexpectedly went into a life-threatening seizure due to amniotic fluid embolism (Afe). She went into a coma, and had to be revived. The doctors called a Code Blue to save her, and put her on life support. She bled uncontrollably and had to undergo emergency surgery.

Most mothers afflicted by Afe do not survive the ordeal. But Mila lived. In thanksgiving, we named her daughter Mary Therese Milagros.

Mila lived, but lay in a deep coma, with very little brain activity. Two weeks into her coma, her neurologist gave us a grim prognosis: that Mila would most likely remain in a persistently vegetative state for the rest of her life, and that her chances of waking up was only one to two percent.

Miracle of life

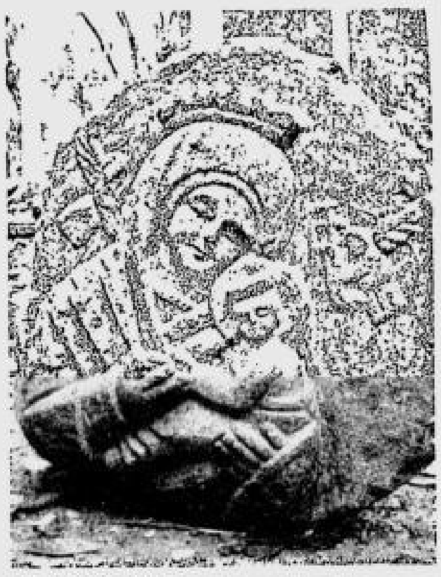
And so we prayed to Our Lady for Mila, praying particularly to Our Lady of Guadalupe whose image was prominently displayed at the hospital lobby. Living up to her name, Mila defied medical statistics and miraculously woke up from her coma four weeks after her embolism.

On Dec. 3, 1996, she was discharged from the hospital "awake" but with severe neurological deficits. She was paralyzed, she lost her ability to speak, she could not see, she could not eat or drink, she could not recognize her own name.

Yet, in spite of Mila's fragility, she continues to be with us today. She has regained her eyesight, she can eat through her mouth when spoon-fed, she recognizes her name, she smiles beautifully, and laughs heartily.

Through this Marian exhibit, we honor Mila for teaching us how to bear suffering with dignity, courage and cheerfulness. Through this exhibit, we thank Our Lady and Our Mother for taking care of us. We celebrate the miracle of life in Mila, and the miracle of life in us all.

Friends in Art, Inc., in cooperation with the Alabang Garden Club, invites you to the "Ave Maria" exhibit of Handcarved Stone Sculptures from the Ukit Milagros Workshop. Exhibit runs until Sept. 21, at 101 University Ave., Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa. Call 0917-8312583 or e-mail wawelmercado@gmail.com.



"PERPETUAL Help"

"MOTHER and Child" 2

Tender Mother,
in stone we carve our thanks

By Wawel A. Mercado
Contributor

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A FASCINATION for stone sculptures. I would find them at roadside garden stalls near our weekend home in Laguna, sold as garden ornaments together with plants.

What I love about them is that they look better as they age, as moss starts growing on the stone. I wonder how anyone could shape figures out of such hard river stones, and admire the artistry of Filipinos.

So I went in search of the Laguna stone artisans. It took me several years to find one. When I did, I was surprised by his youth, and his lean frame, not one you would imagine could work with heavy stones.

He is Ave Sandoval. He learned how to carve stone from his father, who started out as an agent scouting for antiques from home to home, and selling them to antique dealers.

When the demand for antique mills grew because of landscapers, the elder Sandoval tried his hand at making them himself, and was quite successful. His replica stone mills became a hit, prompting him to teach the trade to his two sons.

"MOTHER and Child" detail

As the market became saturated with replicas, the artisans started experimenting with other forms of stone sculpture, forms they would see in their natural environment, such as frogs, lizards, turtles.

When the elder Sandoval retired, it was Ave who continued the trade. But work was seasonal and unpredictable. To make ends meet, he would take on odd jobs as construction worker, gardener, security guard, whatever he could find.

TENDER/ E3

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The legacy of Luciano Pavarotti

Pavarotti's singing is anchored on sound technical grounding and sensitive artistry

ITALIAN opera star Luciano Pavarotti waves to spectators during his concert at Red Square in Moscow in this Sept. 7, 1997 file photo. Hailed by many as the greatest tenor of his generation, he died on Sept. 6, after a long battle with cancer. He was 71.
REUTERS

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI (1935-2007) had reached a larger audience than any of today's operatic celebrities through not only the legitimate stage but also television. He was the first singer to really tap the media, notably TV for opera and music.

It was in 1978 when his recital at the Metropolitan Theater in New York was beamed live on a Sunday at 4 p.m. that was seen by an estimated 12 million viewers. This was followed by many more, among which were the celebrated performances he shared with two other tenors, José Carreras and Placido Domingo dubbed "Three Tenors Concert."

In March 1994, the country's music lovers heard him in a concert at the Philippine International Convention Center, sponsored by Rosemarie "Baby" Arenas. The concert had to be rescheduled as Pavarotti had a terrible bout with cold. Barely recovered from it, he braved through the concert and emerged triumphant.

I witnessed how the audience gave him generous applause, as he managed to sing through the high notes without any hitch, even if it was obvious his vocal production did not carry the usual brilliant sheen.

Earlier, at the press conference, I was stunned by his humility, as he expressed his ardent desire to sing for a charitable cause, sounding more like a philanthropist than a self-centered divo.

It was a memorable concert, indeed. The country's music lovers had that singular opportunity to listen to him live. While he expressed the so-called "chocolate voice," or the rich and robust texture of a lyric tenor, like that of Guiseppe di Stefano whom he admired so much, his "white" or light-textured voice allured simply because of its natural agility to go up the high register.

In 1972, he became the darling of opera buffs in New York after watching him hit the high C nine times with formidable ease as he essayed the role of Tonio in Donizetti's two-act opera "La Fille du Regiment." Since then, he had earned the sobriquet "King of the High C."

Rules of singing

Like many other singers, Pavarotti believed in some fundamental rules in singing. Knowing these basics is the key to understanding classical singing and appreciating his singing even more. These he outlined and discussed in an article he wrote; "On Singing and Interpretation."

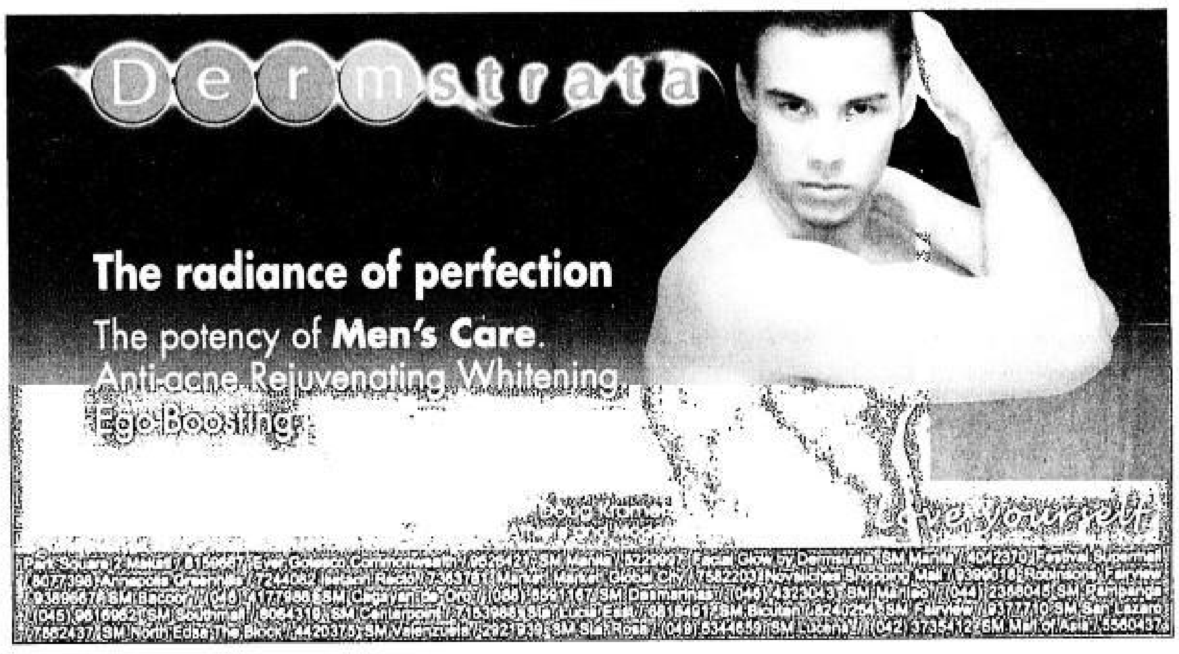
First is the "breathing." Good singing comes from the diaphragm, which is the singer's machine.

One cannot hold a high note, or project that resonating bell-like tone, without the support of the diaphragm, that part of the body that lies between the last rib and the pelvic bone. He said: "If you support the voice correctly from below, you can sing far longer—in one evening and in one life—without the signs of strain."

Next is the placement, which he termed *pasaggio* (passage). This is the ability to shift from one register to the next—lower, middle and high—with only the slightest hint of change.

He wrote: "Every singer has not one voice, but

THE LEGACY/ F3



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"In our era, everything in life – even when you are on vacation – is within your reach, through the Internet. And people want that ability wherever they go."
- Ernesto R. Alberto, PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group

Shown in photo from L-R: Philippe Bartholomi, Friday's Boracay General Manager and 2007 Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP) Biennial Assembly Chairman, Fay Ocampo, PLDT Port Product Manager, and Humphrey O'Leary III, General Manager of Capri International Restaurant and HRAP President.

As the Internet integrates more and more with the day-to-day lifestyle of most people, expectations of what a hotel-stay should offer shift to include increasingly indispensable access to Internet services. Gone are the days of having to search out Internet cafes or the business center in order to keep connected. It is now common for travelers to bring their laptops, or Internet-ready PDAs, along with them, and they expect their hotels to have the infrastructure necessary to connect their devices.

This is true not only for business travelers, whose need for Internet access is obvious. Tourists on vacation at exotic locales also appreciate the ability to check email, upload photos of their trip, and download maps.

"EB White once said, 'Everything in life is somewhere else, and you get there in a car. '," said PLDT SVP and Head of Corporate Business Group Eric R. Alberto. "This was in 1943. In our era, everything in life – even when you are on vacation – is within your reach, and you get them through the Internet...people want that ability wherever they go."

Hoteliers are very much aware of this demand.

"Internet access is one of the top three priorities for travelers, even for those going to leisure destinations," says Mr. Philippe Bartholomi, general manager for the famous Boracay resort, Friday's. "They want convenience – they want access in their rooms."

Mr. Bartholomi estimates that in recent years, he's seen a nearly 100-percent increase in demand for Internet access in Friday's. To satisfy this demand, he had outfitted Friday's with PLDT's Internet solution for hotels, PLDT Port. Specifically designed to provide hotels with a way to give their guests Internet access, both wireless and wired with seamless connectivity from rooms to common areas and back again.

Thanks to his foresight, Friday's guests enjoy wireless access in all rooms of the resort and in the famous restaurant area, despite the difficulties of wiring up areas near the beach. They can access the Internet from their rooms, without needing to configure their laptops for specialized access. They can also bring their laptops out onto the beach and common areas with them, and their access continues seamlessly, operating on the same account, instead of needing to set up multiple accounts and having to log on and off continuously.

Most resorts in Boracay, having realized the necessity of Internet access, are wired to some extent, but few have the comprehensive package that Friday's offers.

"Having Internet access," adds Mr. Humphrey O'Leary, chairman and president of the Hotel and Restaurants Association of the Philippines, an organization whose biennial assembly on the Future of Tourism in RP was sponsored by PLDT Port, "is necessary for the future of tourism in the Philippines."

MANINGNING AWARDS FOR POETRY

Mid-autumn festival of music and verse

By Alma Cruz Miclat
Contributor

THE DAY OF THE full moon of the Eighth Month of the Chinese calendar this year is fast approaching. On this night, the moon is said to be at its biggest and brightest. It is worshipped and/or celebrated in festivities marking the Mid-Autumn Festival. The night after, on Sept. 26, the Maningning Awards for Poetry will be celebrated at the Philamlife Theater.

Moon worship among different cultures started in primeval times. For the Chinese, changes of the moon as it waxes and wanes relate to the vicissitudes of life: joy in coming together and sorrow in parting. A legend has it that Chang-E, the Moon Goddess, was actually a young princess. Left heartbroken upon knowing of her loved one's infidelity, she took a magic elixir that enabled her to fly to the moon and stay there forever. Seeing the bright autumn moon, people remember Chang-E, her sorrowful flight, and the joy of knowing she lives forever in the orb of night.

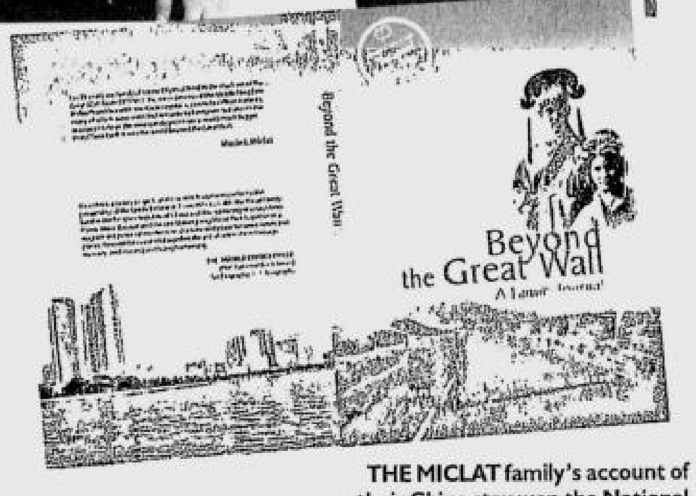
The Chinese actually started formally celebrating mid-autumn as a festival only during the Zhou dynasty (1066-221 BC). Meanwhile, records mentioning moon cakes as an important element in the festivities first appeared in Southern Song (1127-1279). Moon cakes were baked to be given as gifts to relatives to express their wishes for a united family. The festival remained the second most popular, next only to the New Year's festivities, despite upheavals and changes of dynasties, governments and rulers.

CYNTHIA Alexander, Susan Fernandez and Girl Valencia

Celebrating life

Personally, I have considered September as the autumn of my life since the year 2000 when our much beloved eldest daughter, Maningning, joined the goddess Chang-E in her flight to the moon. But like the folk believers of festivals, I have tried to transform my grief into a celebration: a celebration of my daughter's short life well lived.

In 1987, our China-born Maningning held her first solo exhibit of Chinese paintings entitled "Maningning: An Exhibit of Chinese Brush Works" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The 15-year-old artist, the youngest who exhibited at CCP that year, was also a trilingual poet and writer. Her first exhibit, of scrolls in Chinese ink and brush, showed her discipline in Si Junzi Hua (Four Paintings of a Gentleman: the bamboo, orchid, plum blossom and chrysanthemum).



THE MICLAT family's account of their China stay won the National Book Award in biography

In 1992, her nonrepresentational oil painting in western style canvas, "Trouble in Paradise," was awarded grand winner by the Art Association of the Philippines. Her trilingual book of poetry, "Voice from the Underworld: A Book of Verses" (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2000) was finalist in the Manila Critics Circle's National Book Award.

Twenty years after her first painting exhibit and seven years after her flight, the Maningning Miclat Art Foundation. Inc. (MMAFI, founded in her honor) will present "Maningning : An Evening Of Poetry And Music" at Philamlife Theater, United Nations Avenue, Manila on Sept. 26, at 7 p.m.

This will be the 3rd Maningning Awards for Poetry started in 2003 and held every odd numbered year. The Maningning Awards for Painting is held during even-numbered years.

The 2005 awards, billed "Triptych/Tatluhan," was held at CCP. In April this year, MMAFI held the well-attended "Banaue in Concert" where Maningning's younger sister, Banaue Miclat, sang operatic arias and *kundimans*.

Finalists

Nine finalists in the 2007 Maningning Miclat Poetry Competition in Filipino, English and Chinese have been named and will vie for the grand prize. The finalists in the English division of the competition are Mark Anthony Cayanan, Raymond John A. de Borja and Joy Anne Icayan.

In the Filipino division are Mark Anthony Sy Angeles, Erica Clariz C. de los Reyes and Carlos M. Piocos III. Meanwhile, all three finalists (Chen Siyuan, Chen Wei and Zhang Huichao) in the Chinese division came from Guangdong, China which sent the most number of entries. Other entries came from Beijing, Shanxi, Gansu, Fujian, and Chejiang in China, as well as from Vietnam and the Philippines.

The grand winners of the 2007 Maningning Miclat Poetry Competition in Filipino, English and Chinese will be awarded P28,000 each, a Julie Lluch sculpture trophy, and special limited hardbound edition of "Voice from the Underworld: A Book Of Verses, Beauty for Ashes: Remembering Maningning," and "Beyond the Great Wall: A Family Journal." The first two books were nominated in the National Book Award for Poetry in 2001 and 2002, respectively. While the last was recently awarded 2006 National Book Award in biography/autobiography by the Manila Critics Circle.

A concert during the awards night will feature three most talented singers in the country—Cynthia Alexander, Susan Fernandez and Girl Valencia. Reading of excerpts from the winning poems in English, Filipino and Chinese divisions is also included in the program.

The poetry award and concert is sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, San Miguel Corp., Emerson Network Power, Huatong Xinli Flooring Co. Ltd. and World News Publications.

Call 0918-9057311, 0916-4340167 or 8124885/6. You can also get tickets from Philamlife (5269250/72/65), Conspiracy Café (4532170) or Mag.net Katipunan (9293191), Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (4266001 loc 5811), Kaisa para sa Kaunlaran (5266796).

E-mail acmiclat2004@yahoo.com, maningningfoundation@gmail.com and visit www.maningning.com.

The contributor is co-author of "Beyond the Great Wall : A Family Journal," together with her husband, Mario Ignacio Miclat, and daughters Maningning and Banaue. The Anvil book was recently awarded the 2006 National Book Award for Biography/Autobiography by the Manila Critics Circle. It is available at National Bookstore and PowerBooks.

Quaching the Luce with the Manila Symphony Orchestra

By Ian Rosales Casocot
Contributor

> For Dumaguete, to see a living legend like Quach in action is astounding

THERE WERE THREE "BEGINNINGS" you could derive from the "Manila Symphony Orchestra in Concert" which had a gala premiere at Claire Isabel McGill Luce Auditorium in Dumaguete City last Sept. 7.

First, there was the resounding start as the orchestra opened its repertoire with a tempestuous rendition of the "Lupang Hinirang," which alone was worth any price of the ticket. Surely, one had never heard the National Anthem rendered in quite the same way, with such oblique passion, stirring and sweetly troubling at the same time. It made you sit up and think there's bite to this night yet.

In the end, such expectation was justified by the relish one felt when the last notes had rung off, and yet the audience still lingered and hesitated to leave, hoping for an encore.

It was an evening of classical music that proved a resonating fulfillment for both head and heart—and, yes, ears. For once, the typically testy Dumaguete crowd was moved.

The national anthem, of course, was grand introduction enough to what was to come: under the baton of the world-renowned Helen Quach, the Manila Symphony Orchestra-one of the oldest orchestras in Asia—has created music that was tantalizing in its control and beauty.

The second beginning comes with the first composition in the program that the orchestra dove into. In choosing the "Leonore Overture No. 3" by Ludwig van Beethoven, the venerable Ms Quach set the tone for a night with the masters in their sweeping romantic best.

The overture—taken from Beethoven's sole opera titled "Fidelio" (which is the story of a woman named Leonore coming to the rescue of her imprisoned husband Florestan while dressed as a prison guard named Fidelio)—is known in music circles as the very apotheosis of Beethoven's dramatic music.

MANILA Symphony Orchestra in Claire Isabel McGill Luce Auditorium, Dumaguete City JOHN LACSON

CONDUCTOR Helen Quach

The orchestra beautifully managed to clinch the demands of the beginning with strings and woodwind slowly descending for an octave, and in that musical instant I could picture Florestan in his subterranean prison, despairing. It is a highly dramatic piece that ranges from the deep sighing of strings and bassoon to a feisty main section with the violins and cello.

Exquisite balance

Through it all, Quach, who conducted without any scores, showed herself the full master of her art with exquisite sense of balance, massaging each section into one another which made the overture truly the drama that it promised to be.

That sweeping drama is equaled in intensity with the orchestra's third and last piece for the night, with Pyotor Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in E minor, where Quach effortlessly strove to render the dramatic arc demanded of the piece, from the funereal first movement to the triumphant march of the last.

With Edvard Grieg's "Piano Concerto in A minor" as their middle piece, the orchestra is joined by concert pianist Cristine Coyiuto, who has been dubbed by critics as the "poetess of the piano."

That distinction is a right perfectly earned by Coyiuto for her intense virtuoso take on the piano, and last Friday night, she seamlessly took on the haunting first movement of Grieg's masterpiece, but retained a surprising nimbleness verging on savage grace that somehow came to me as a grand gesture toward the Norwegian folk sound of the composer's birthplace whose centenary we celebrate this year.

Guilty secrets

That Coyiuto is a brilliant pianist is a matter of wide recognition. In her explorations of the music's sweep, Grieg's composition—once described by Geoff Kuenning as being "filled with invention, originality and sparkle that cannot help but please the ear"—sounded like the best of guilty secrets.

I mentioned a third beginning in the beginning of this article. Perhaps a better word is "reemergence." That rightfully belongs to that exact moment when Quach took to the Luce Auditorium stage, ready to pounce—for that was how her energy seemed to be like last Friday night—on the music, and to wrest from the score an orchestral equivalent of heaven.

For Dumaguete to see a living legend in action is astounding

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Doggone classical concert

Top classical artists team up in a benefit concert to raise funds for the training of search-and-rescue dogs

By Dexter R. Matilla
Contributor

DOGS WILL ALways be man's best friend. But ask Kumiko Kuroda, and she'll tell you they can be more, as this year's "Dog Day Afternoon" (DDA) benefit concert would prove. Kuroda, along with Reneé Speltz and Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) chair and Sen. Richard Gordon cochair this year's fundraiser, which will be an elegant soiree of light classical music on Sept. 22 at the Kuroda residence in Caimito, Forbes Park, Makati.

Just as it was last year, proceeds of DDA 2007 will be used to fund the training of search-and-rescue dogs of the Philippine K9 Search and Rescue (PhK9SAR) Foundation. Also benefiting will be Project 143, a PNRC project that trains 43 volunteers in every barangay nationwide.

Kuroda relates how the PhK9SAR dogs were able to locate bodies faster during the Guinsaogon, Leyte Landslide and the Guinobatan, Albay Mudslide last year. Prior to that, the dogs were also a critical factor during the search-and-rescue mission for the missing University of Santo Tomas mountaineer as well as during the December 2004 Quezon Province mudslide operation.

Ph9KSAR began as a dream by a group of civic-oriented people and dog trainers, and breeders who recognize dogs' peculiar talents in search and rescue.

Speltz, who was then approached by the group, became instantly committed together with husband, Ambassador Paul Speltz.

Bringing together other like-minded personalities led to the establishment of Ph9KSAR.

The foundation, an organizational member of the National Association for Search and Rescue (Nasar) which is based in the United States, is the first and only K9SAR group in Asia and a partner and affiliate of various government and non-government agencies such as the Office of Civil Defense, Philippines Coast Guard and PNRC.

RICHARD Gordon explains the need for additional dog and volunteer handlers to the author and (from left) PhK9SAR's Noel Lim, Kuroda and Antonia Loyzaga of the Manila Observatory.

CHAIRMAN and Piolo show their love to Kumiko Kuroda.

GREG Zuniega

CRISTINE Coyiuto

RENATO Lucas

Nasar instructors and evaluators have given PhK9SAR handlers and three dogs "mission-ready" status.

To qualify, a volunteer handler must be at least 21 years old, of good moral character, physically and mentally fit, at least a high-school graduate, able to commit to the foundation, can get along with other volunteers, and must have a relationship with their dog outside of the training.

Qualified handlers undergo serious training such as the International Red Cross Basic Life Support, Mass Casualty Incident, Basic Mountaineering Course, Canine First Aid, Helicopter Safety Procedures.

Meanwhile, the dogs have to be at least 12 months old, fit and structured for search and rescue, intelligent, trainable, transportable, show natural scenting ability, and of good temperament.

According to PhK9SAR president Jejomar Erwin Binay Jr., the dogs have the ability to smell people who may be buried 40-100 feet below the ground depending on the conditions.

"Dogs' smelling abilities are higher than any instrument or technology available today," Binay Jr. said. "In the event that a major earthquake happens, or any disaster for that matter, hopefully with the help of the dogs, we can help save a lot of lives."

Classical music concert

A couple of research has been done to determine how dogs react to certain kinds of music. Results were the same from both United Kingdom and Northern Ireland—dogs tend to be rowdy and noisy when exposed to heavy metal music while better behaved when listening to classical music.

Which makes the "Dog Day Afternoon" a perfect fit for dog lovers and classical music aficionados alike.

Guests will be treated to performances of some of the best musicians and singers such as Christine Coyiuto, Greg Zuniega, Renato Lucas, Dong de Dios, Margarita Yulo-Gomez and Kuroda, who is a recorder, concert artist and teacher.

Considered by critics as "the pianist's pianist" and "poetess of the piano," Coyiuto studied with legendary pianist and pedagogue Rosario Picazo at Sta. Isabel College and was a pupil of Jacob Lateiner at the famous Juilliard School in New York City.

Zuniega is considered as one of the country's most versatile musicians.

He pursued further studies at the Tchaikowsky Moscow State Conservatory and finished his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the Royal College in London and was presented the prestigious Tagore Gold Medal by the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Lucas, who teaches at the UST Conservatory of Music and is the acting resident conductor of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, has had recent appearances as a soloist of the Philippine Philharmonic during its European and Japan tours as well as performances with the Brno Philharmonic of the Czech Republic.

De Dios, also a professor at the UST Conservatory, is a concert guitarist while Gomez is a Rosa Ponselle and Curtis Scholar in voice and the Philippines' top coloratura soprano.

"The afternoon will be a high-quality classical concert," Kuroda said. "[By raising funds] it will help the PhK9SAR help Filipinos affected by disasters… to rebuild their lives."

Call 02-6878546.

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com

Quaching the Luce..

From page F2

enough to consider.

Quach, who was born in Saigon to Chinese parents and who had made her conducting debut in 1960 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (the first woman ever appointed to the post), had retired from active conducting a few years back after she had an electrocution accident, after which she also discovered she had breast cancer.

She chose to bow out from a career that had her leading some of the best orchestras in the world. She opted to convalesce in her home in Sydney, Australia where she would do battle with the disease, resolving to heal herself without surgery, chemotherapy, or radiotherapy, aiding herself only in Eck spiritual exercises.

The experience had left her a gentler soul, a perfect contrast to a temperamental reputation that had earned her the title "the lady tyrant of the podium," dressed in fashionable cheongsam or miniskirt, her hair in a fierce bob.

That was not without merit, however. Her mentor, the famous Leonard Bernstein, called her a *maestra* with "[sharp] rhythmic sense… [quick] reflexes, her address to the orchestra captivating."

The bob and her imposing brilliant eyes remain, although the cheongsam is gone, replaced Friday night with a tailored dress in severe black, punctuated at the back with a triangular patch of gold. The sartorial consideration must pale of course to the music she wrought from the Manila Symphony Orchestra: She made sumptuous a night's excursion through classical music, commanding the Luce stage like the baton queen she was, and continually is.

The legacy of Luciano Pavarotti

From page F1

three different voices—a lower, a middle and an upper. When you are singing and move from one of these voices up to the other, there is often a noticeable changing of gears.

"You can hear where the voice is moving from one of these vocal areas—you call them registers—to the next. Now, to insure a good passage or placement, the singer learns where these changes occur, and works to control them with extra care so that the vocal change is as small as possible."

This is what the term "line" is associated with, which also counts on two more important considerations, the legato and *portamento*.

The former means "smoothly connected," and the latter, "to carry or bring the note up or down." In singing, legato is best shown with the continuous connection of one tone to the other. It is from this that a flowing musical line is achieved.

On the other hand, the *portamento* must be used wisely. *Portamento* does not mean "scooping," which is the "jumping from one note to the other, and sliding to the next." Its execution is indicated in the score, but most of the time a tradition in performance indicates its use, even if it is not indicated in the scope.

On top of these considerations comes "concentration."

This was very obvious in Pavarotti's singing in all his concerts. Easily detected were his still posture and serious facial expression suggesting a powerful concentration, as he essayed a difficult phrase or sustained a high note. But concentration alone, he said, "will not produce good results if there is nothing in the head and the heart to concentrate with."

Here is where technique and artistry come in. The breathing and *passagio* lie on the technical side, while the phrasing, legato singing and *portamento* on the artistic side—two key lessons which Pavarotti had ably demonstrated in his performances.

His execution of the cadenza, that flourish ornamentation that usually ends an aria to show the capability or virtuosity of the vocal instrument had always awed his listeners. He capably held high notes in long duration, and ably sustained the last note. Even better, his top notes were secure, robust, ringing and well-rounded.

All these things make up what beautiful singing is all about, otherwise known as *bel canto*.

Crowning glory

Of course, there is much more to be desired in appreciating operatic arias. This is not the end of it all. But this begs the question: For what does a singer train if such a singer cannot hit the high notes? And in opera the top notes are the singer's crowning glory, vocally speaking.

Thus, Pavarotti said, one can sing "badly" all evening, but "come in strong" in the high C's and "the public will forgive everything." On the other hand, one can sing beautifully but a "crack" in top note will "ruin the whole evening."

It is with these considerations that one, indeed, listens to Pavarotti, whose effortless rendition of the best arias culled from the world's famous operas and those affecting Neapolitan songs, which he transposed a note or two higher, makes one's listening to him more pleasurable.

Pavarotti's singing is thus anchored on a sound technical grounding and sensitive artistry.

The art of beautiful singing is not achieved by just opening the mouth and loudly belting out vocal tones as some singers would do it. These types of singers do not last; and the irony of it is, at an early age, their voices are spent.

For those whose singing is honed on a hit-and-miss basis, their voices also easily vanish, especially when they quit schooling. Not in the case of Pavarotti, and the other *bel canto* singers whose voices last longer as they are technically honed correctly, and properly taken care of.

These are the legacies Pavarotti has left when he went to the Great Divide on Sept. 6. Born on Oct. 12, 1935, he gloriously sang and touched his listeners' hearts for over five decades.

He shared his music not only for one's listening pleasure but also for humanitarian purpose. He did not keep to himself pedagogic technique out of sheer selfishness, but shared it to many aspiring singers as well.

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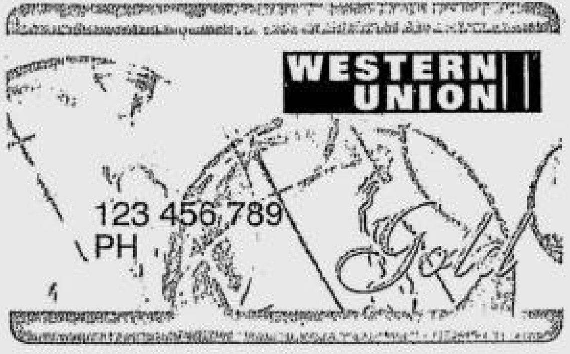

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BALLET MANILA'S 'SWAN LAKE'

A classic warhorse returns

BALLERINAS of Ballet Manila with prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde

BALLET MANILA MOUNTS THE most demanding of the classic "warhorses"—"Swan Lake."

The production will open Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m., at Aliw Theater. Top-billed by prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, who has danced the most difficult twin roles of Odette/Odile in no less than 23 full-length performances all over the world, "Swan Lake" will surely enthrall the audience as it showcases the unparalleled classical skills the BM dancers have developed over years of rigorous training in the unmodified Vaganova method.

"When you use the term 'warhorse,' you picture this massive stallion—strong, sturdy, reliable even in the fiercest of battles, alert even in weariness," said Macuja-Elizalde. "For us, 'Swan Lake' is like that stallion. Over the centuries, it has remained both a prestigious hallmark and a formidable yardstick for classical-ballet companies. Ballet Manila is proud to be the only company in the Philippines with enough strong and competent dancers to perform this full-length masterpiece."

Restaged for the third time by People's Artist of Russia and former Kirov Ballet premier danseur Sergey Vikulov, Ballet Manila's "Swan Lake" features new choreographic sections specially designed to highlight the impressive skills of his young Filipino dancers.

Coaching was provided by Russian Ballet Academy mentor Tatiana Udalenkova, who paid special attention to BM's "swans" and corps de ballet work.

Reprising the role of Prince Siegfried is guest artist Maxim Chaschegorov, formerly of the Marinsky (Kirov) Ballet and now principal soloist of the Munich Ballet. (He was last seen dancing opposite Macuja-Elizalde in last year's production of "La Bayadere.")

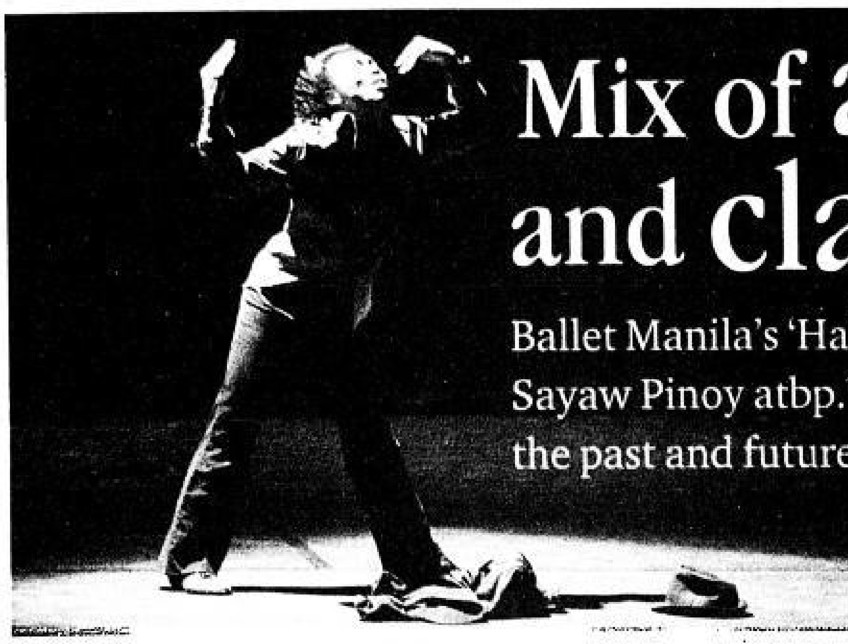
Other performances will feature the "Swan Lake" debuts of BM "princes" Rudy de Dios and Nazer Salgado as Siegfried, and soloists Mylene Aggabao and Marian Faustino alternating as Odette/Odile.

This celebration in dance also provides a fitting send-off to the Ballet Manila dancers who will represent the Philippines in the Gyeongju World Performing Arts Festival at the Gyeong World Culture Expo 2007 in Korea Oct. 19-27, under the auspices of IOV, a Unesco NGO.

"Swan Lake" performances are scheduled Sept. 28-30 and Oct. 5-7 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Call 5255967 or 4043086.

Mix of avant-garde and classical

Ballet Manila's 'Halo-Halo 2: Sayaw Pinoy atbp.' shows the past and future of ballet


"KAFKAESQUE." Ernest Mandap in "Acide"

BM in Tony Fabella's "Dancing to Czerny," which exudes the atmosphere of a Paris Opera House

By Elka Krystle R. Requinta
Contributor

IT WAS NO SMALL shock to see a very different Ballet Manila (BM) in its 12th season opener, "Halo-Halo 2," at the Aliw Theater.

Once described by dance luminary Edna Vida as a classical ballet company "whose roots are firmly grounded in the Russian Vaganova soil," BM seems to have successfully explored the eclectic beats of European-inspired modern dances in half of the aptly titled whirlwind showcase.

First-night audiences were still raving nonstop about the "impressive" production more than 45 minutes after the show ended.

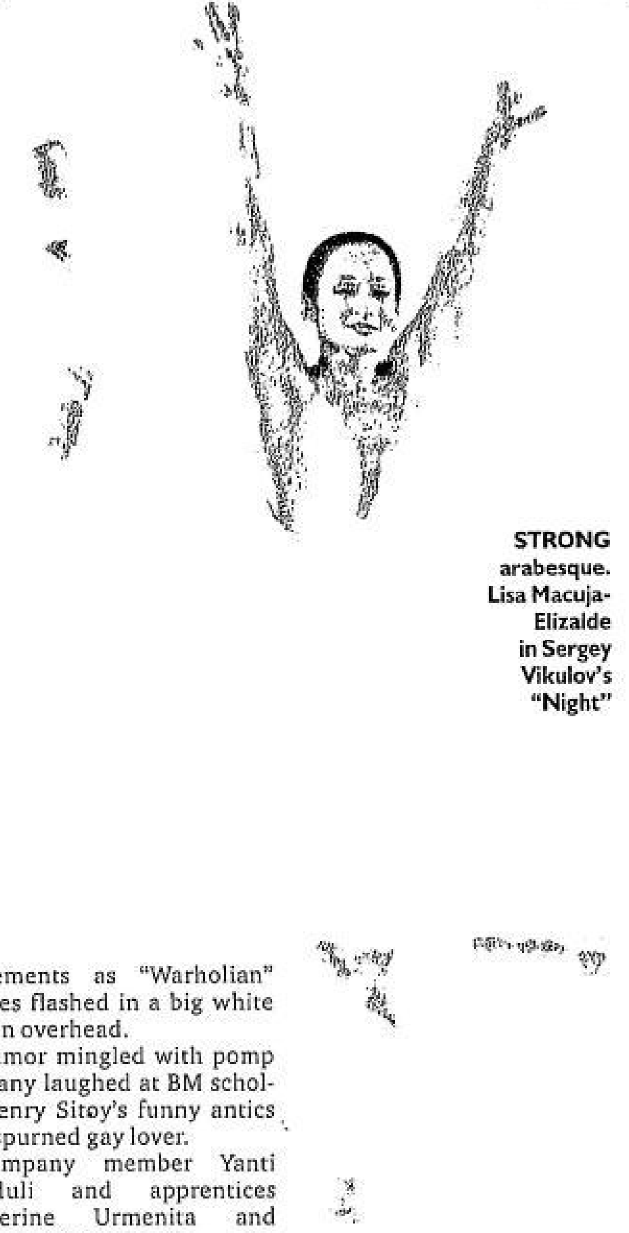
Each of BM's dancers was admirable in guest choreographer Ernest Mandap's avant-garde ballets (read: far-out, indeterminable themes): "Mis Amores" (my loves) and "Reve" (dream), which premiered that evening.

Being seasoned soloists, sophisticated Sofia Sanco and naughty Marian Faustino excelled in their respective lead/solos in "Mis Amores," which is a collection of divertissements displaying various moods (not to mention jolting scenes like Faustino's kiss with a fellow female dancer) with the help of bossa nova, jazz, tango, mambo and South-American disco music.

Both brimmed with Latin charm and sensual adagio movements as "Warholian" images flashed in a big white screen overhead.

Humor mingled with pomp as many laughed at BM scholar Henry Sitoy's funny antics as a spurned gay lover.

Company member Yanti Marduli and apprentices Catherine Urmenita and Michael Divinagracia were a joy to watch as well, but they still looked a bit classical. Nevertheless, the three successfully hurdled the difficulties and earned repetitive applause, especially for the moving makeshift playhouse scene.


STRONG arabesque. Lisa Macuja-Elizalde in Sergey Vikulov's "Night"

Tumbling pair

Senior soloist Jerome Espejo and soloist Gerardo Francisco also got amazed reactions in "Mis Amores," but they attracted more attention in the gravity-defying "Reve," which infused capoiera techniques in their otherwise agile dancing skills.

The two seemed to enjoy tumbling across the stage in the reprised version of rock band Metallica's "Unforgiven."

Mandap, who works for Company Claude Brumachon and is co-founder of Company Esther Aumatell in France, showed uncontrollable emotions in his energizing impromptu solo, "Acide."

His special one-night performance, reminiscent of "Kafkaesque" stunts and the classic old-school, beat-box "poplocking" generation, revved up the audience and got heads bobbing and fingers tapping to the music.

JEROME Espejo behind Gerardo Francisco in Mandap's energy-infused "Reve"

While the company seems more open to successfully tapping into other genres in dance, it is still firmly rooted to its traditional image.

This was quite evident when BM started and ended with strictly classical pieces from two of its long-time choreographers: Sergey Vikulov of the world-renowned Maryinsky Ballet (formerly Kirov), and Tony Fabella, one of the Philippines' "institutions" in dance. It also restaged Agrippina Vaganova's classical "Diane et Acteon" pas de deux, as performed by the seemingly weightless Mylene Aggabao and the sturdy Niño Guevarra, who used the piece as their entry for the recent international ballet competitions in Shanghai and Seoul.

Love quadrangle

Vikulov's minimalist but dramatic "Night," which is loosely based on one of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels, is compressed into a sad love quadrangle between The Dreamer, The Girl, The Lover, and The Stranger.

No further laurels are needed for BM artistic director and principal dancer Lisa Macuja-Elizalde as she framed The Girl with absolute certainty.

The prima ballerina, who recently obtained her diploma in Bachelor of Science in Management from University of Phoenix Online (Distance Learning), was never lax. With movements still fluid and with arabesques still strong, Macuja-Elizalde received reverent ovations from the audience.

The female corps did not let themselves be ignored. Although a supporting cast for the "ballerina of the masses," they were united and exact in their movements as a white blur; reminiscent of the wraithlike Willis in the classical ballet "Giselle."

Soloist Rudy de Dios as The Dreamer has vastly improved in theatrical expressiveness as he was able to make each play of emotions—hope, fear and hurt—apparent.

As The Stranger, company member Francis Cascaño (in lavender tights!) did a memorable portrayal while bullying Macuja-Elizalde and De Dios' characters. Marcus Tolentino was a stylish portrait of The Lover. It was a pity though that his scenes were scarce.

Almost an hour long, "Night," which was set to the haunting Symphony No. 1 by Jean Sibelius, was a bit dragging for the mostly denim-clad, sneaker-wearing audience (a disappointing reality for gala nights that used to be dress-up affairs). But it was well-applauded at curtain call.

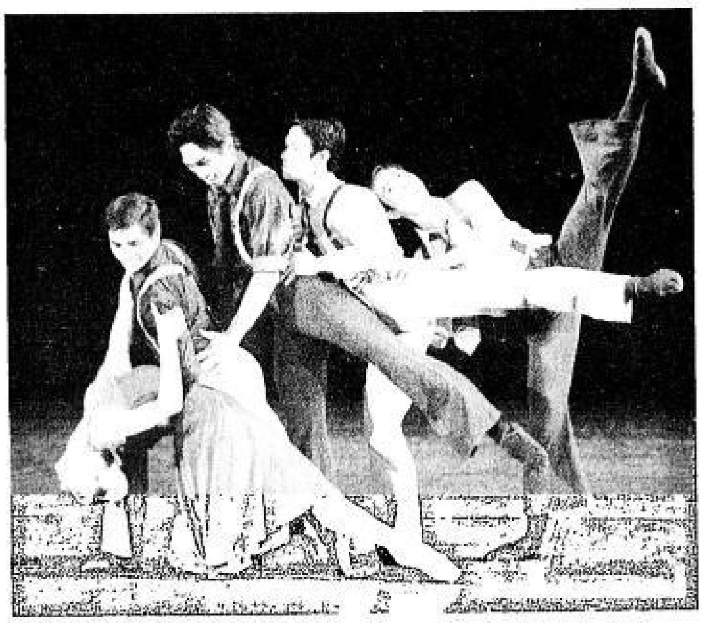
Elegantly thrilling

Fabella's latest opus, "Dancing to [Giuseppe] Verdi," was set against what seemed like an equally grand mini version of the Paris Opera House, complete with a gigantic chandelier and sets of ribbed lighted curtains. "Dancing to [Carl] Czerny" was an elegantly thrilling finale with Fabella's famous "cast of hundreds."

The company, wearing white and gold, moved in unison and made the simple steps look clean and grandiose.

Macuja-Elizalde let loose a round of her signature series of pirouettes and chaînés, equaled by some estimated 17 fouettés simultaneously thrown out by Sanco, Faustino and Aggabao, to the delight of the audience.

Ballet Manila continues its 12th season with "Swan Lake" on Sept. 28-30 and Oct. 5-7; "Pinocchio" and "Nutcracker" in December; and "Le Corsaire" in February.


MARIAN Faustino with charming Francisco, Michael Divinagracia, Espejo and comical Henry Sitoy in "Mis Amores"

MYLENE Aggabao and Niño Guevarra in their contest entry, "Diane et Acteon"

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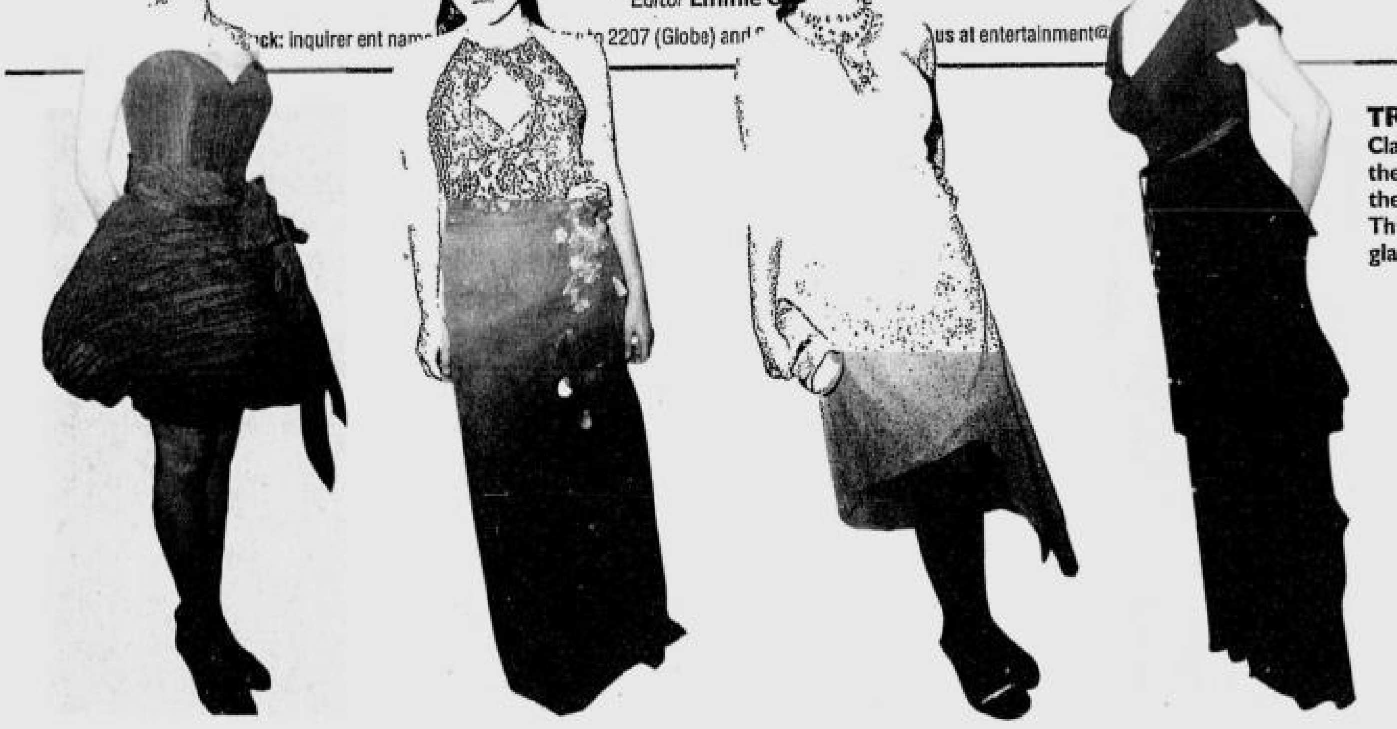
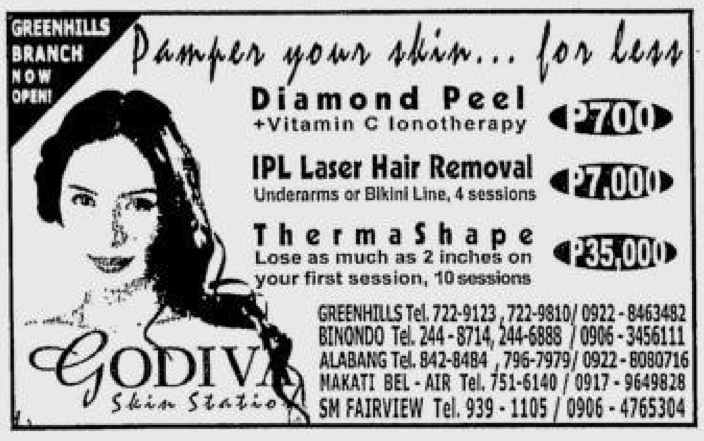
Was Willie suspended?

"WOWOWEE" TV host Willie Revillame was reportedly slapped with a three-day suspension for his outburst against Joey de Leon of the rival show "Eat Bulaga" on Aug. 29. Persistent talk say the suspension coincided with Willie's scheduled trip to Las Vegas. ABS-CBN Corporate Communications head Bong Osorio told INQUIRER there was no truth to the rumor. *Marinel R. Cruz*



TRADITIONAL THEME Classic silhouettes seemed to be the fashion order of the evening at the 30th Gawad Urian rites on Thursday, and the ladies seemed glad to comply. (From far left): Jennylyn Mercado in a gown by Edd Sy; Yasmien Kurdi in an Angelo Estera original; Ehra Madrigal in a Jun Escario; and Lorna Tolentino in a Paul Cabral. MARINEL R. CRUZ
PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA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Six months early, Oscars buzz here

TORONTO—WITH NEARLY six months until Hollywood's biggest party, everyone is already thinking about the Academy Awards. Not many will admit that the thought of winning an Oscar crosses their mind, though.

"Pass," Oscar winner Cate Blanchett said with a laugh, declining to discuss the awards prospects for "Elizabeth: The Golden Age," the follow-up to 1998's "Elizabeth" that earned the actress her first nomination.

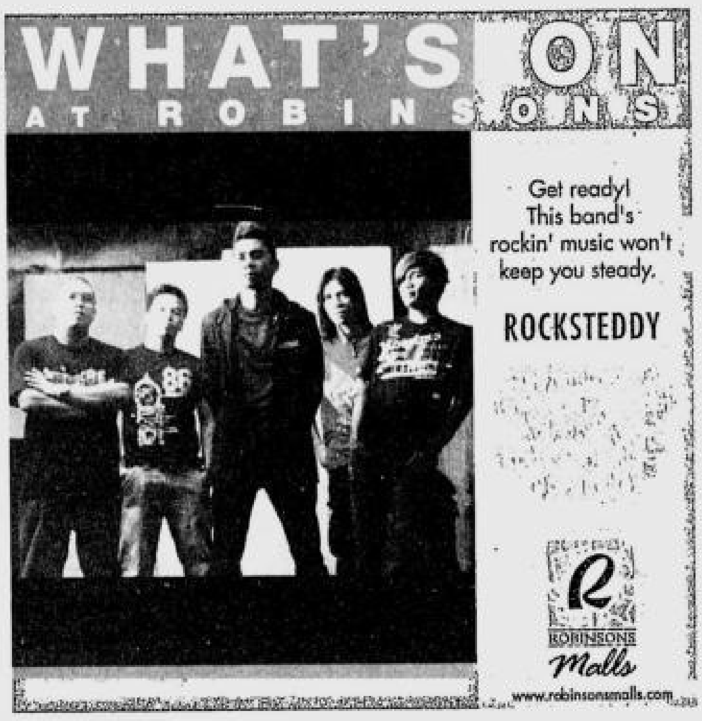
Surely people who haven't won an Oscar must fret over their chances?

"No," said Brad Pitt, a past nominee for "Twelve Monkeys" who delivers a potent performance as the legendary Old West outlaw in "The Assassination of Jesse James" by the Coward Robert Ford. "And I don't read the tabloids, either."

Both Blanchett and Pitt's movies are playing at the Toronto International Film Festival, which (with its Telluride and Venice counterparts) marks the unofficial start of awards season by showcasing prestige productions looking to catch some early Oscar buzz.

Whether any festival entries will maintain awards momentum

SIX/G3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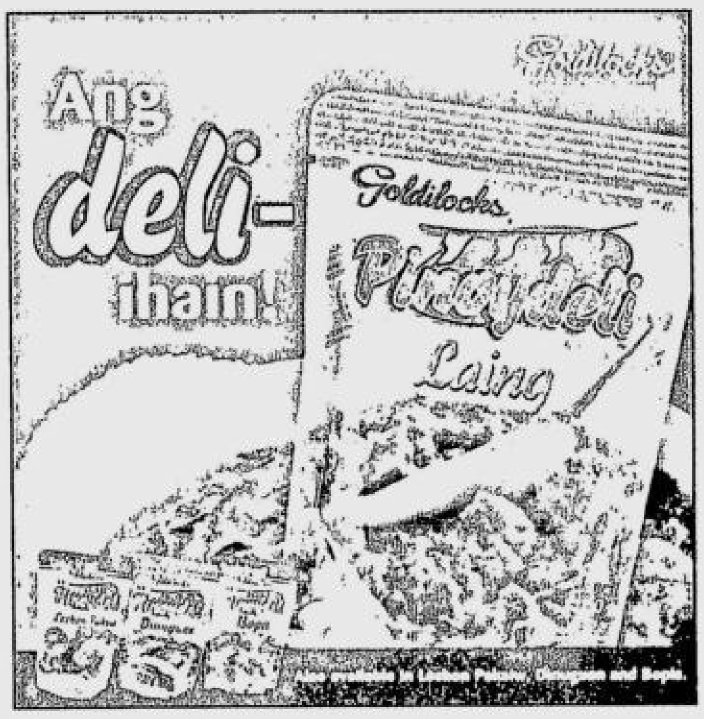

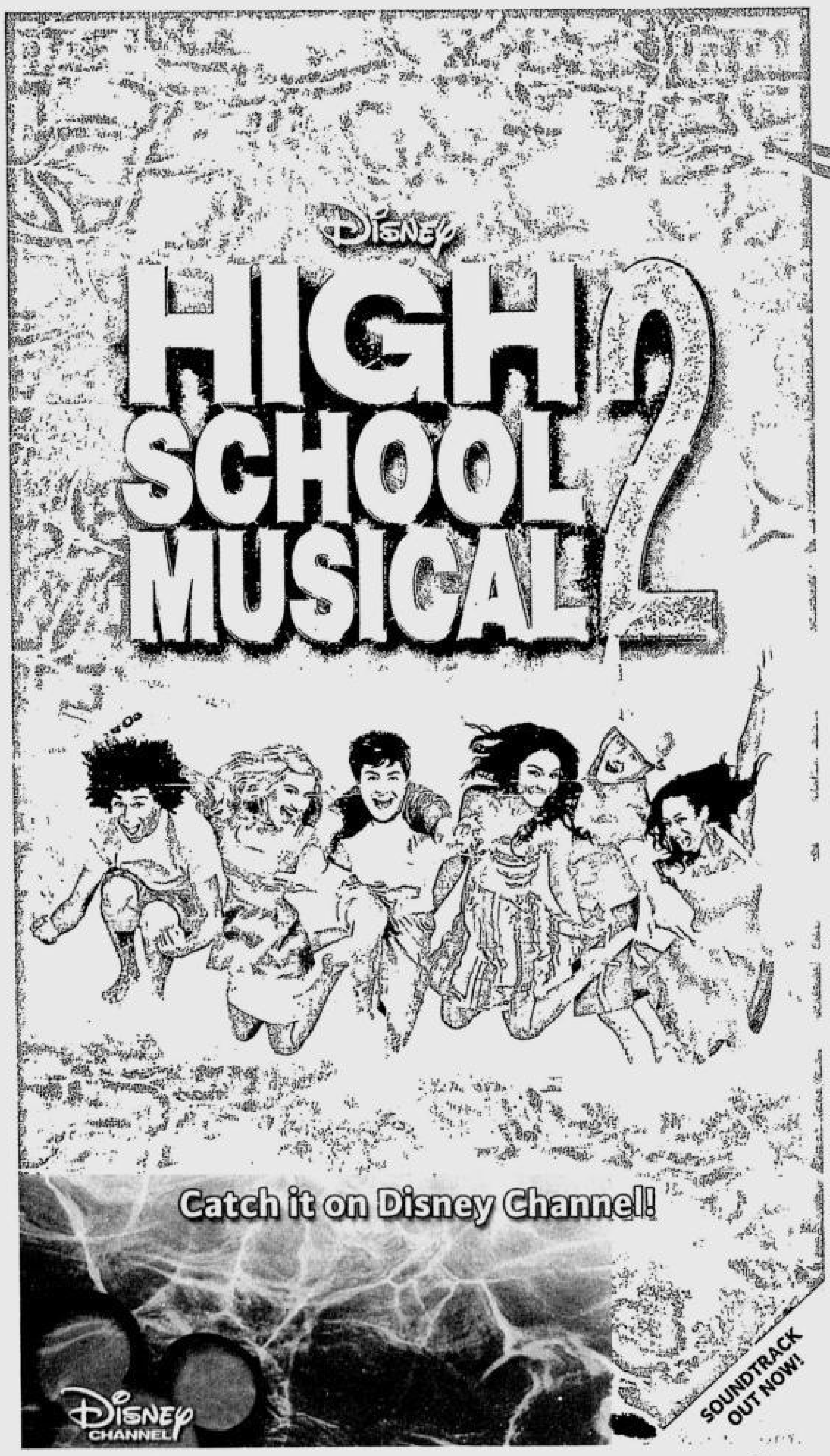

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DID YOU KNOW...

AIKO Melendez and Martin Jickain split up this week, between them 1-year-old daughter, Marthena. In New York last week, the Associated Press likewise reported the breakup of Heath Ledger and Michelle Williams, who have a 2-year-old daughter, Matilda. AP quoted Williams' father, Larry—a prominent stock trader based in Australia while he faces US tax evasion charges—as telling Sydney's The Daily Telegraph: "I feel tremendously for her and for him, and hope they will find what they want in life." *AP*

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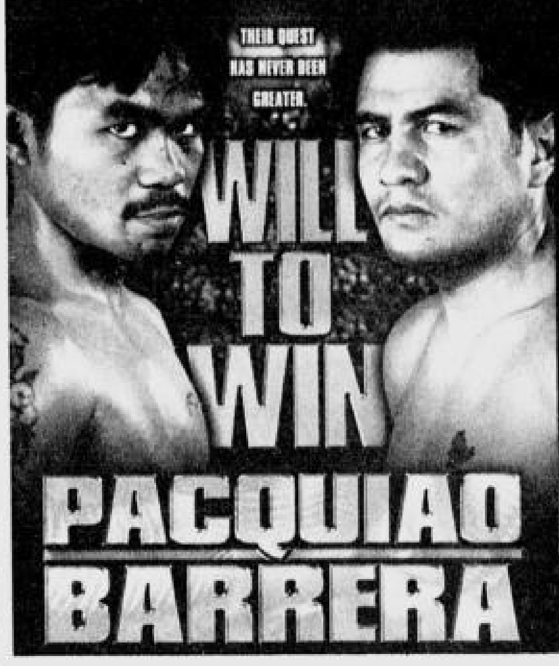
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2 EVAN ALMIGHTY
3 THE LAST LEGION
4 1408
5 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
6 THE BRAVE ONE
7 ROGUE ASSASSIN
8 A LOVE STORY
9 SKINWALKERS
10 DAYWATCH/RUSH HOUR 3
11 UNDERDOG
12 SKINWALKERS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 UNDERDOG
4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
5 1408
6 SKINWALKERS
7 DISTURBIA
8 EVAN ALMIGHTY
9 A LOVE STORY
10 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
3 1408
4 A LOVE STORY/CARTOON NETWORK
5 THE BRAVE ONE
6 UNDERDOG

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
4 THE BRAVE ONE
5 SKINWALKERS
6 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
7 1408
8 A LOVE STORY
ANINO NG SETYEMBRE/CARTOON NETWORK

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 NANCY DREW
3 UNDERDOG
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
3 CARTOON NETWORK/ANINO NG SETYEMBRE
4 1408
5 UNDERDOG
6 ROGUE ASSASSIN
GANDHI, MY FATHER/EVAN ALMIGHTY
8 FOSTER CHILD
9 DISTURBIA
10 A LOVE STORY
11 RUSH HOUR 3
12 SKINWALKERS

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 DAYWATCH
3 THE LAST LEGION
4 UNDERDOG

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 UNDERDOG
4 DISTURBIA

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 DAYWATCH
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 UNDERDOG

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 1408
2 SKINWALKERS
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 THE BRAVE ONE
5 UNDERDOG
6 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
7 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
8 A LOVE STORY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
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3 1408
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1 1408
2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
3 UNDERDOG
4 DISTURBIA

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1 INVASION
2 UNDERDOG
3 HAIRSPRAY
4 MY KUYA'S WEDDING

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1 UNDERDOG
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 FOSTER CHILD/CARTOON NETWORK
5 A LOVE STORY
6 MY KUYA'S WEDDING

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4 1408

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2 UNDERDOG
3 A LOVE STORY
4 ANINO NG SETYEMBRE/RUSH HOUR 3
5 RISE/BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 INVASION

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 UNDERDOG
2 1408
3 INVASION
4 EVAN ALMIGHTY

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 HAIRSPRAY
2 INVASION
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 UNDERDOG
5 1408
6 EVAN ALMIGHTY
7 RESERVED
8 THE LAST LEGION

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

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2 EVAN ALMIGHTY
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 UNDERDOG
5 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 FOSTER CHILD
7 A LOVE STORY
8 CARTOON NETWORK/ROGUE ASSASSIN

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010

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2 INVASION
3 SINKING OF JAPAN
4 1408

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

High ratings for 2 films with unusual story lines

By Marinel R. Cruz

A FILM ABOUT A MAN WHO RENTS OUT coffins for a living and a nun who scales the mountains to teach catechism recently received A and B ratings, respectively, from the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Neal "Buboy" Tan's "Ataul for Rent," produced by Artiste Entertainment Works International, got an "A" on account of "the tour-de-force performance by the actors—down to the rats," said CEB chair Christine Dayrit.

"Ataul" stars Joel Torre, Jaclyn Jose, Noni Buencamino, Irma Adlawan, Pen Medina, Ryan Eigenmann, Epy Quizon, Ronnie Lazaro and Coco Martin. Producers hired trainers for the rodents.

The movie is set in a congested alleyway where the residents are so poor, they could not afford caskets for their departed loved ones. "The squalor, poverty and lack of peace and order and all the other details in the production design make the film an excellent work of art," said Dayrit, citing a reviewer.

"Social satire was invoked successfully," Dayrit added, quoting another CEB board member. "It is a different take from the titillating films Tan has made." Tan earlier made sexy films like "Maldita," "Kalabit," "Karelasyon" and "Puri."

An A grade entitles a movie to a 100-percent tax rebate; a B fetches a 65-percent rebate.

The "simple, straightforward and unpretentious storytelling" in Bong Ramos' film earned a B rating for "Haw-Ang."

The board described Ramos as being "at ease with the milieu," prompting one reviewer to comment, "The director must be very intimate with the setting … or he must have done a thorough research on Ifugao life."

"Haw-Ang" was shot around the Hungduan rice terraces in Ifugao Province. It tells the story of Sister Adel, who goes to a farming village in Ifugao to teach catechism, and who eventually builds a schoolhouse. Even as she breaks tribal traditions, Sister Adel makes a big difference in the lives of the townsfolk, especially that of Dacmay, a 7-year-old girl in search of her mother.

Dayrit said it would have gotten an A, if not for its "slow" pace. However, the reviewers believe it was a deliberate attempt to show "that time passes slowly in the highlands."

First-time child actors from Hapao Village in Hungduan delivered "competent performances," the CEB chair said, adding that Dacmay, the central character, was "thoroughly believable."

Rihanna, JT strike gold at MTV video awards

RIHANNA REUTERS

LAS VEGAS—TEENAGE R&B star Rihanna and pop sensation Justin Timberlake were the big winners at the recent MTV Video Music Awards.

Rihanna picked up the most-sought-after Video of the Year award and Monster Single of the Year for her "Umbrella," notably beating R&B starlet Beyonce, Timberlake, rapper Kanye West and British soul singer Amy Winehouse.

"Wow. Video of the Year. This was definitely the most important one for me of the night … the most unexpected for me," Rihanna said, accepting the top Moonman, as the astronaut-themed statuettes are known.

Timberlake, whose "What Goes Around … Comes Around" reached number one in the US charts earlier this year, was named Male Artist of the Year.

"It's just exciting to see a new generation of artists really doing it and doing it well," he said. "I think music is in a great place right now because we're all doing what we want to do."

Underground Chicago foursome Fall Out Boy—due to perform in Manila this weekend—picked up the Best Group Award. *AFP*

CATE Blanchett REUTERS

BRAD Pitt REUTERS

Six months …

From page G1

through nominations day on Jan. 22 and the 80th Oscars ceremony on Feb. 24 remains to be seen. The idea for studios and publicists is simply to trot out the films, get the stars and filmmakers to mug for photographers at red-carpet premieres and hope the critics say nice things such as "Oscar-worthy performance" or "serious best-picture contender."

Contenders list

Other Toronto films that will get the once-over by awards watchers include "Michael Clayton," starring Oscar winner George Clooney in a legal drama; director Sean Penn's "Into the Wild," the real-life tale of a young man that comes to a tragic end in Alaska; "The Brave One," with two-time Oscar winner Jodie Foster as a vigilante; "Sleuth," an update of the 1972 romp that earned Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine best-actor nominations, the new version starring two-time Oscar winner Caine in the Olivier role and Jude Law in Caine's part; and "In the Valley of Elah," a murder mystery set among returning Iraq war veterans that stars Oscar winners Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron and Susan Sarandon.

Who wants it?

"Every actor in the world would be lying if they denied that somehow in their head they had always wanted to win an Oscar," Clooney said. "The funny thing is, once you've won one, you actually have beaten your expectation of what you thought you'd achieve. I've got a statue sitting at home somewhere in a room … "

Oscar candidates have emerged from films released early this year, notably best-actress winner Julie Christie, who stars in "Away From Her," which arrives on DVD Tuesday. So far, no slam-dunks have materialized such as last year's top acting winners, Helen Mirren for "The Queen" and Forest Whitaker for "The Last King of Scotland." *AP*

SHANG CINEPLEX
① UNDERDOG MTRCB GP 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
② THE BRAVE ONE MTRCB R 13 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
③ ROGUE ASSASSIN MTRCB R-13 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
④ DISTURBIA MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE NANCY DREW (GP) 2:00, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30
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GLORIETTA 4	1 UNDERDOG	2 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME	3 THX THE BRAVE ONE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 NANCY DREW / THE INVASION	5 DISTURBIA	6 ROGUE ASSASIN	7 1408
GREENBELT 1	1 ROGUE ASSASIN	2 THE BRAVE ONE		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX ROGUE ASSASIN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE BRAVE ONE GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 DISTURBIA GUARANTEED SEATS	4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME GUARANTEED SEATS	5 UNDERDOG GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE BRAVE ONE	2 ROGUE ASSASIN		
	3 UNDERDOG	4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME	5 DISTURBIA	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DISTURBIA	2 UNDERDOG	3 PAN'S LABYRINTH	4 1408
MARKET! MARKET!	1 ROGUE ASSASIN	2 1408		
	3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME	4 THE BRAVE ONE	5 UNDERDOG	
TRINOMA	1 EVAN ALMIGHTY	2 DISTURBIA	3 UNDERDOG GUARANTEED SEATS	4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 1408	6 ROGUE ASSASIN	7 THX THE BRAVE ONE GUARANTEED SEATS	

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Ayala Malls

glorietta	Martin Nievera's Album Launch September 19, 2007; 6 PM at the Activity Center
GREENBELT	Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek Presents: Collection of Kate Torralba September 12 to 23, 2007 at Greenbelt 3 Lobby
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Philippine Robotics September 17 to 19, 2007 at the Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Elliot Yamin of American Idol Live! September 26; 6 PM; OnStage (Cinema 1)
MARKET! MARKET!	Health & Beauty Outlet Sale September 17 to 20, 2007 at the Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids at REP's Globe Theater - Opens August 11, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM	Pioneers of Philippine Art: Transnationalism in the Late 19th - 20th century June 15, 2007 to January 6, 2008 at the 3rd Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Noma	Samsung Exhibit An exhibit of the latest Samsung mobile phones September 14 to 16; 10am to 9 pm; Starbucks / Food Choices Level 2

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Sam Rockwell Vera Farmiga
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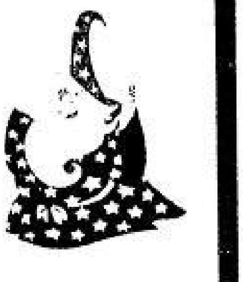

Chicago Tribune cites 'Tirador'

"TIRADOR (SLINGSHOT)," BRILLANTE MENDOZA's digital film about small-time crooks, has been lauded by Chicago Tribune critic Michael Phillips as one of the best movies in the recently concluded Toronto International Film Festival.

In the Sept. 10 issue of the Tribune, Phillips described "Tirador" as "a superb drama" from a director "who makes the streets, alleys and crushing deprivations of Manila come to wrenching life."

Phillips added: "Shot like a mini-'Bourne' film with lightweight high-def video cameras, it darts from one acutely observed vignette to another, all relating to a group of pickpockets and their families."

The movie was shot with a hidden camera during the actual Quiapo feast of the Black Nazarene.

"Some of the details break your heart, without the trappings or musical cues of melodrama," wrote Phillips. "Director Mendoza's characters are always racing by political posters promising change and hope. All well and good, but as Bertolt Brecht put it: Food first, morals later."

The "Tirador" cast includes Jiro Manio, Coco Martin, Nathan Lopez and Kristoffer King.

In special roles are Jaclyn Jose, Julio Diaz, Simon Ibarra, Harold Montano, Angela Ruiz, Benjie Filomeno, Arman Reyes and Nico Taverna.

The movie has been invited to next year's Berlin International Film Festival.

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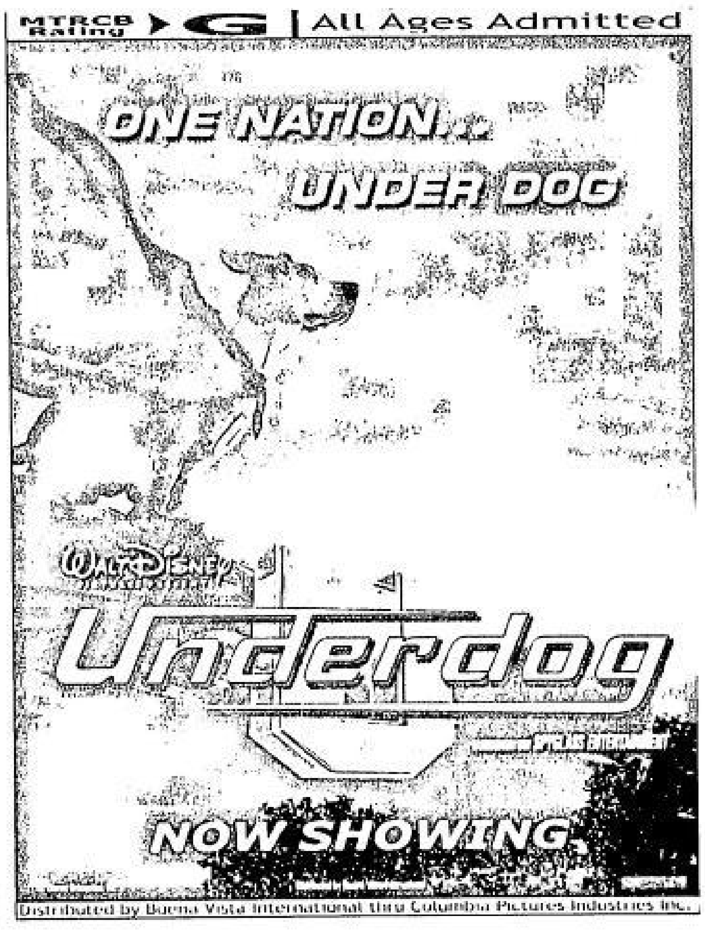
3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:05
R-13

2 WAR: ROGUE ASSASSIN
3:05, 5:35, 8:05, 10:40
R-13

3 UNDERDOG
2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 10:55
G

4 DISTURBIA
3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

MTRCB Rating ▶ G | All Ages Admitted



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Martin says hard times helped him

'Every singer has to get burned once in a while'

By Pocholo Concepcion

MARTIN NIEVERA WALKS into the room and barks: "All right, who made it… who made it through the rain?"

A downpour had delayed the arrival of the entertainment media for the launch of Martin's new album, the double CD "Milestones" (EMI Phils.) which marks his 25th anniversary in show biz.

The singer/TV host nearly didn't get to finish the project, bent as he was on pursuing his dream to become a star in Las Vegas, a dream sidetracked by a little misfortune.

Martin, 45, had done the hotel circuit in Vegas three years ago, and was prepared to do more. It seemed he was ready to settle down in Vegas, too, with current partner Katrina Ojeda and son Santino.

Then he was duped by, of all guys, a Pinoy businessman who turned out to have a string of bad deals. This happened in March. Instead of heading back for Manila, Martin sought out gigs on his own, and stayed in Vegas for four months.

"I wanted other producers there to see me," he says now. "That was my plan."

Why is Martin so hot about Vegas?

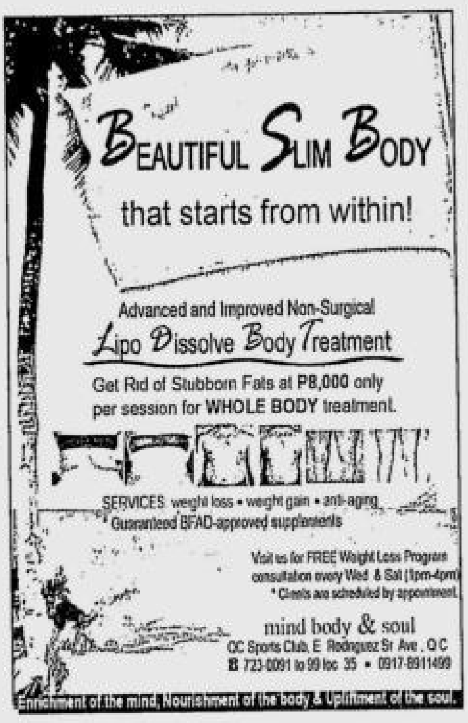
Performers booked there used to be looked down on as desperate. A prime example was Elvis Presley, whose Vegas stint

MARTIN/ H2

CHEER FACTOR

A first for Billboard

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—Billboard magazine has picked country music singer Reba McEntire for its first "Woman of the Year" award. The magazine said the award coincides with its second annual Women in Music issue, which will be published in early October. Billboard group editorial director Tamara Conniff said the country star was chosen for her "wide success in music." McEntire, 52, has a new album of duets coming out next week. *AP*



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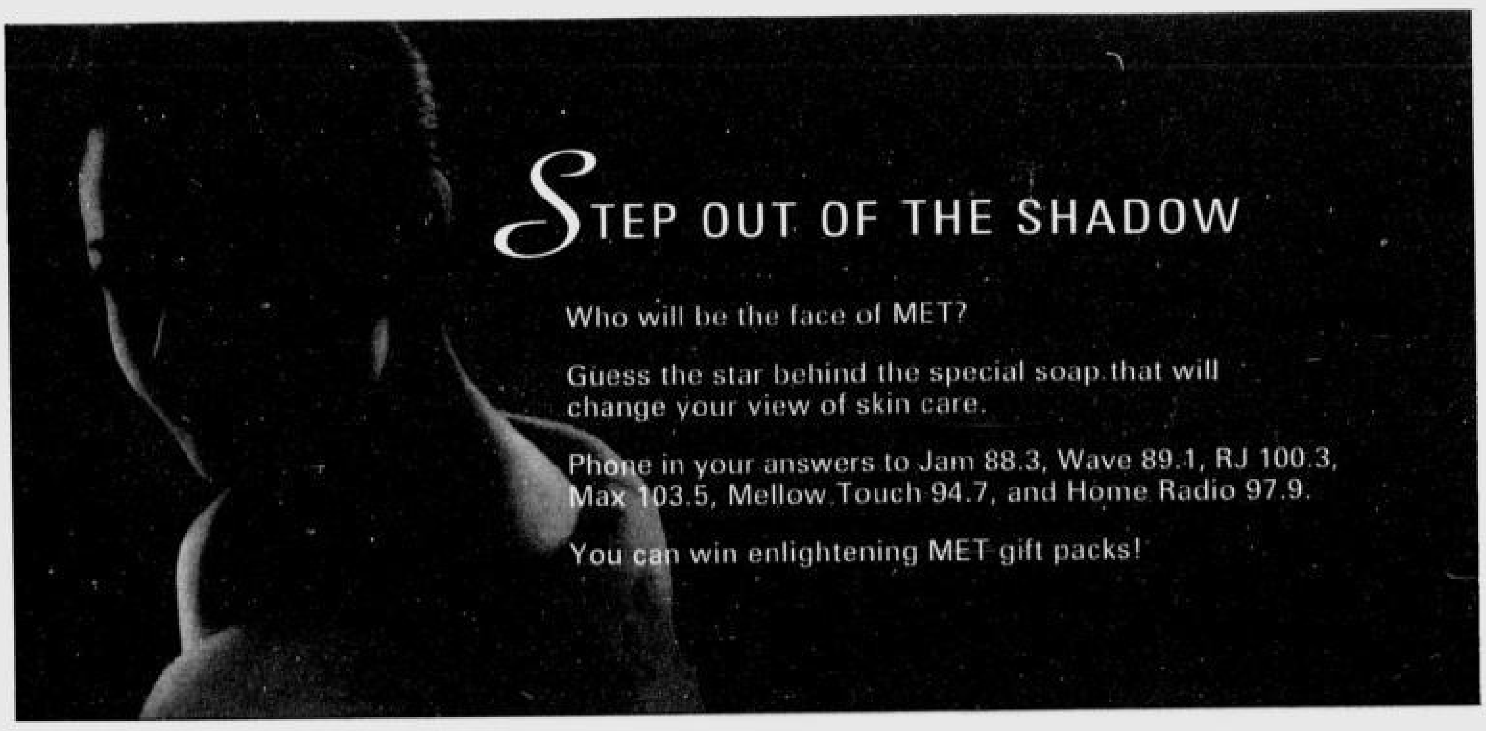

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3 I KNOW WHO KILL ME
4 UNDERDOG
5 ROGUE ASSASIN
6 UNDERDOG
7 THE BRAVE ONE
8 A LOVE STORY
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HOUR - 3 / SKINWALKERS

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2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 I KNOW WHO KILL ME

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 UNDERDOG
2 THE INVASION

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 UNDERDOG
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 DON'T LOOK BACK
4 HAIRSPRAY

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SINKING JAPAN
2 1408

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) THE BRAVE ONE
2 (DOLBY) DISTURBIA
3 (DOLBY) UNDERDOG
4 (DOLBY) ROGUE ASSASIN

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

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2 THE INVASION
3 UNDERDOG
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SIGNOS
2 PLANET TERROR
3 SINKING JAPAN

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 FRACTURE
2 SIGNOS
3 SINKING JAPAN
4 THREE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
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2 UNDERDOG
3 RISE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 DON'T LOOK BACK
2 LAST LEGION

Llanas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SKINWALKERS
2 MALAGKIT
3 ITLOG
4 LAST LEGION

Llanas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
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2 TAGOS SA LAMAN
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 LAST LEGION
5 UNDERDOO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0750
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2 THE INVASION
3 DON'T LOOK BACK
4 UNDERDOG

Berma Cinema
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1 TUMITIBOK
2 BATANG MAGDALENA

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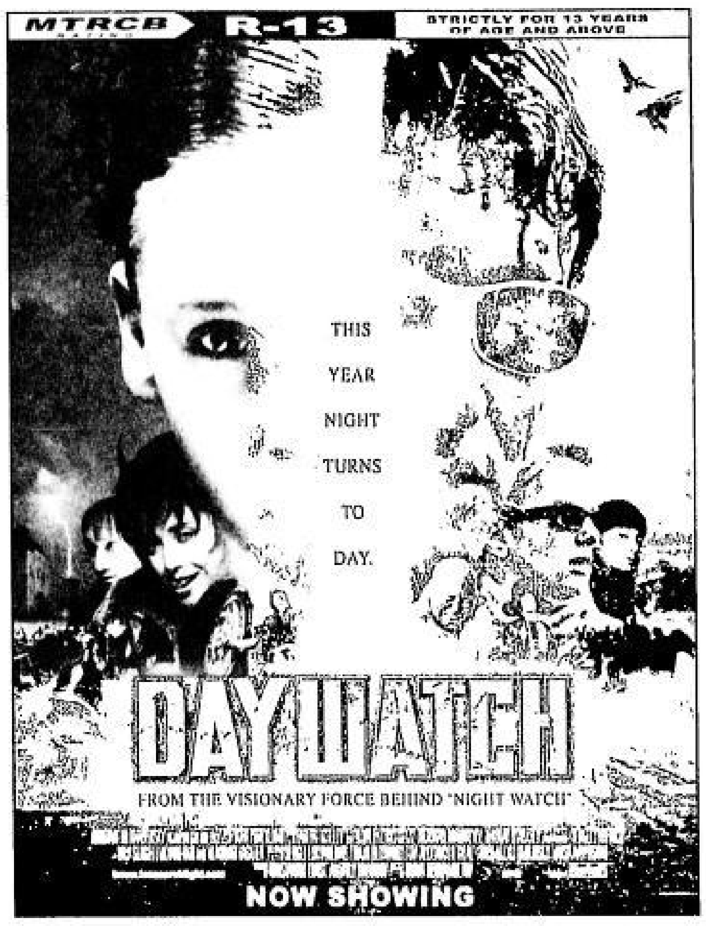
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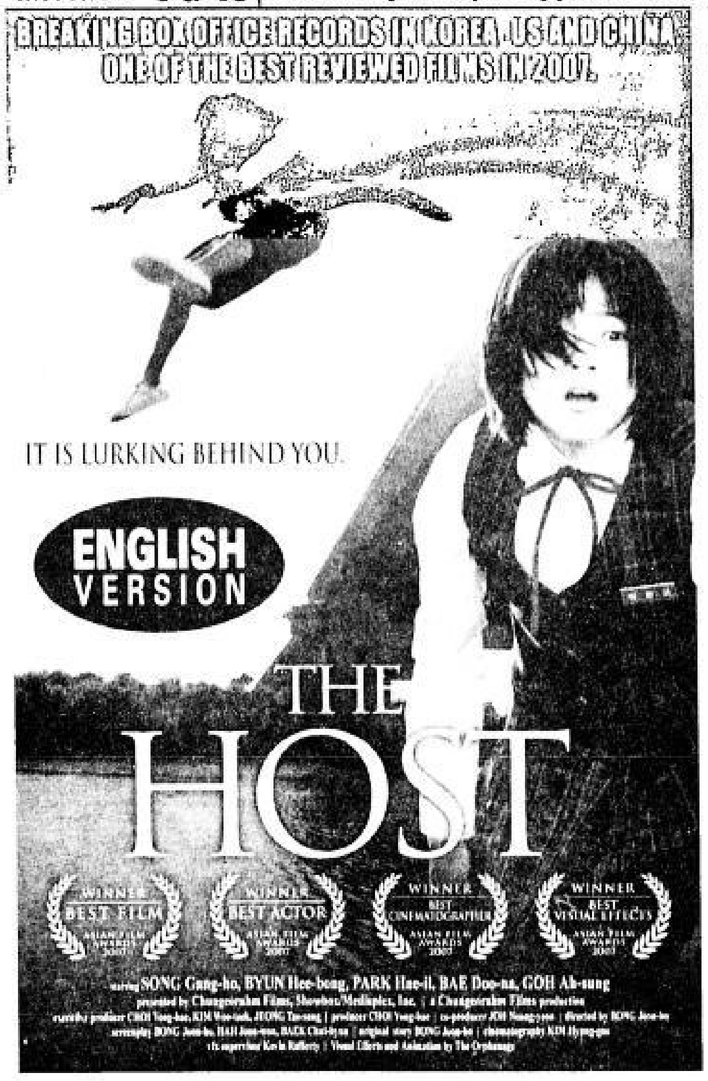
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WINNER BEST CINEMATOGRAPHER ASIAN FILM AWARDS 2007
WINNER BEST VISUAL EFFECTS ASIAN FILM AWARDS 2007
starring SONG Gang-ho, BYUN Hee-bong, PARK Hae-il, BAE Doo-na, GOH Ah-sung

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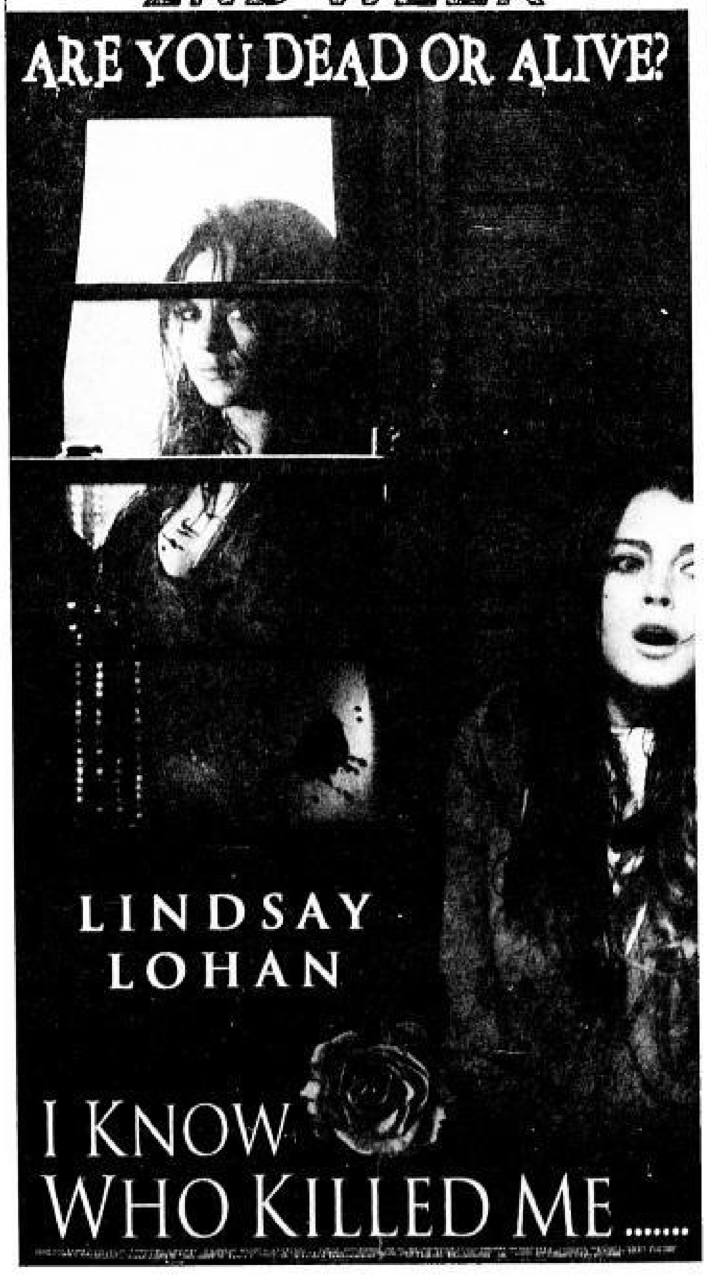
2ND WEEK


ARE YOU DEAD OR ALIVE?
LINDSAY LOHAN
I KNOW WHO KILLED ME......

Martin says...

From page H1

in the 1970s was considered the worst in his career.

But these are different times, and Vegas is no longer equated with desperation. The measure of success for most musicians is the number of records and concerts sold.

At this album launch, Martin says that, after the humbling experience, the right peopie h
ing to help him land major

In the meantime, comm
record the new album. "Mi
producer Chito Ilagan— ex
(from 1982) is represented

**Which of your past, albu
turning point in your life?**

The "Forever" album (1
point of my life. I recorded
through my split-up with P
was a song that she and I lo

**You sound a lot like you
songs in "Milestones."**

Yeah, well, maybe b
heavy ballads.

**Do you see yourself doing
did before in Hawaii's he
ety of Seven?**

That's what I was doing
loved it. It stretched my vo

**You went through a lot
has it helped your music?**

A lot. I think every singer
while. Every singer or art
don't mean the numbe
you've been slapped arou
have on the side, all the
that's important, for a bal

For diehard fans to sing along with

"MILESTONES" IS for the diehard Martin Nievera fan. Young wives, for example, will delight in singing along to most of the covers here. In fact, almost all the tracks are covers, save for three—a live version of "Be My Lady," a fresh take on "You Are My Song," and the lone new num ber, "I Sing," which closes the album.

The discriminat ing listener, howev er, will notice that for all the mark that Martin has made as a great pop singer, there are songs that don work in his favor.

"Smooth" is one example, originally a hot Latin rock

POWER PLANT CINEMA
ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41
DOLBY DIGITAL

UNDERDOG G 1:10,3:10,5:10, 7:10,9:10	I KNOW WHO KILLED ME R13 1:00,3:20,5:40, 8:00,10:20	THE BRAVE ONE R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30
ROGUE ASSASSIN R13 1:50,4:00,6:10, 8:20,10:30	NANCY DREW G 2:30,4:40,6:50,9:00	DISTURBIA PG13 1:00,3:15

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

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CINEMA 1 ROUGE ASSASIN 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 R-13
CINEMA 2 NANCY DREW // DISTURBIA 11:10, 1:30, 3:50 // 5:55, 8:15, 10:35 GP / PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 R-13
CINEMA 4 UNDERDOG 11:05, 1:15, 3:25 5:35, 7:45, 10:00 GP
CINEMA 5 THE BRAVE ONE 10:45, 1:35, 4:25 7:15, 10:00 R-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

September 22, 2007	Jett Pangan, Michael De Mesa, Ricky Davao	8:00 PM
September 29, 2007	Sugarfree	8:00 PM
October 08 & 09, 2007	"Alamat", Stageplay	[illegible]
October 12 & 13, 2007	Apo Hiking Society	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

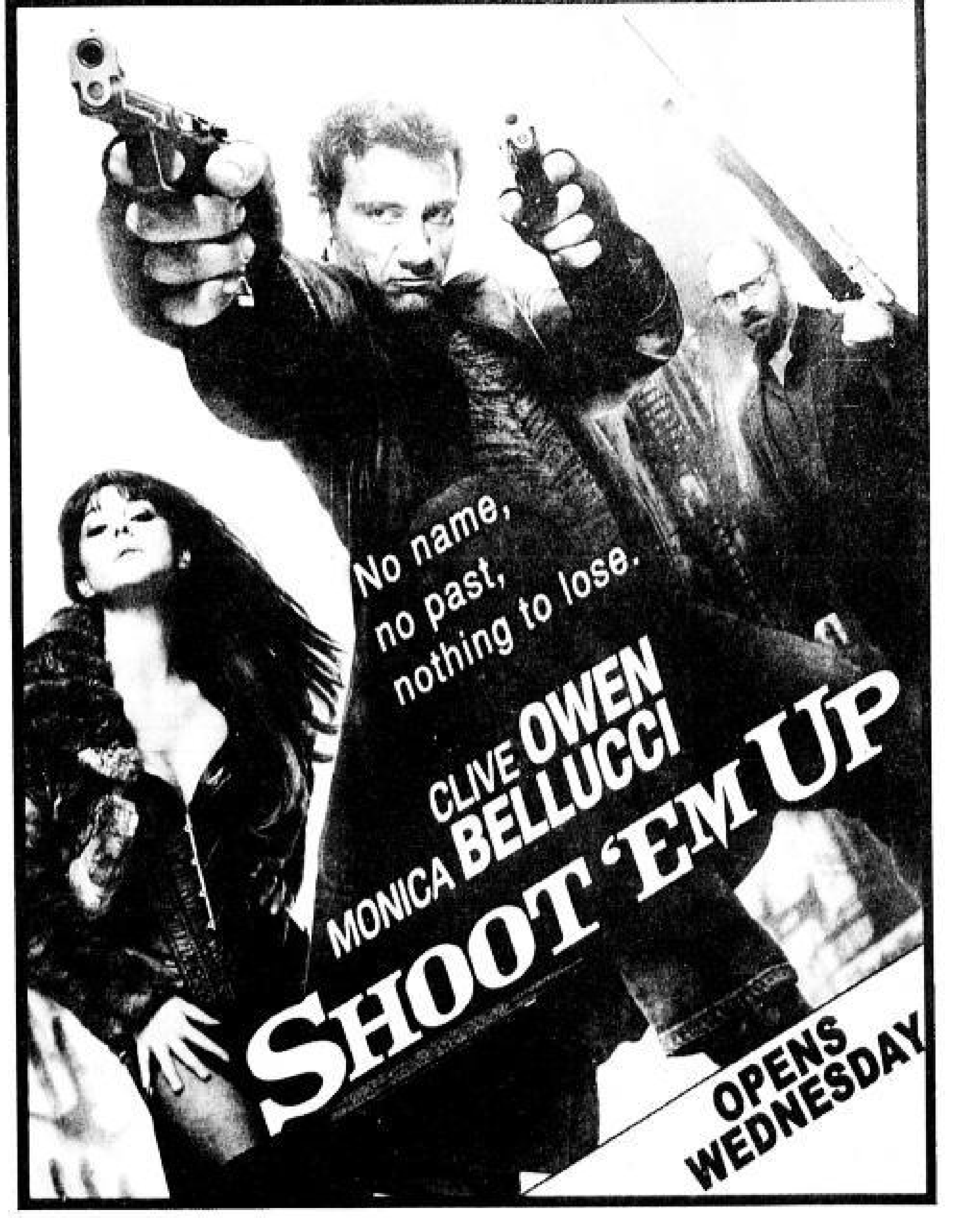
Sept. 21, 28, 2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM
Sep. 12, 26, 27, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Cerrudo Classico	8:00 PM

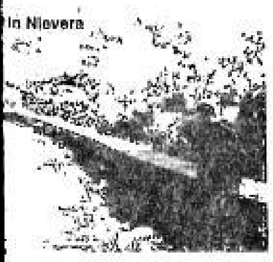
FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

"Some of this stuff is so out there YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!"
~Pete Hammond, MAXIM

"This NEW BREED of action thriller HITS THE BULL'S EYE."
~Stephen Rebello, PLAYBOY

"This is a WET DREAM for ACTION JUNKIES."
~Peter Travers, Rolling Stone





in Nievera

tune by Santana (sung and co-written by Rob Thomas), but which ends up as an unsuccessful attempt to sound cool in Martin's hands.

But the likes of Side A's "Forevermore" saves the day, with Martin's falsetto quite a revelation.

Supposedly, every year in his career (since 1982) is represented here by a hit song.

If you ask us, he deserves a more carefully appraised collection. *Pocholo Concepcion*

ive been turning up, want-
igs.
home made it possible to
estones" was conceived by
ry year in Martin's career
by a hit song.

ns represented a major

98). That was the lowest
it in five days. I was going
ps. Every song on that CD
ed.
r father in some of the

ise some of the songs are

more of what your father
tel circuit, with the Soci-

in Vegas three years ago. I
e—it's higher now.
f personal trouble. How

has to get burned once in a
improves with age and I
mean how many times
d, the little romance you
things teach you and...
leer especially.

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ONE INCONCEIVABLE EVENT.
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ROGUE ASSASSIN

ONE NATION...
UNDER DOG
Walt Disney
Underdog
Now showing
at all
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MTRCB Rating: G
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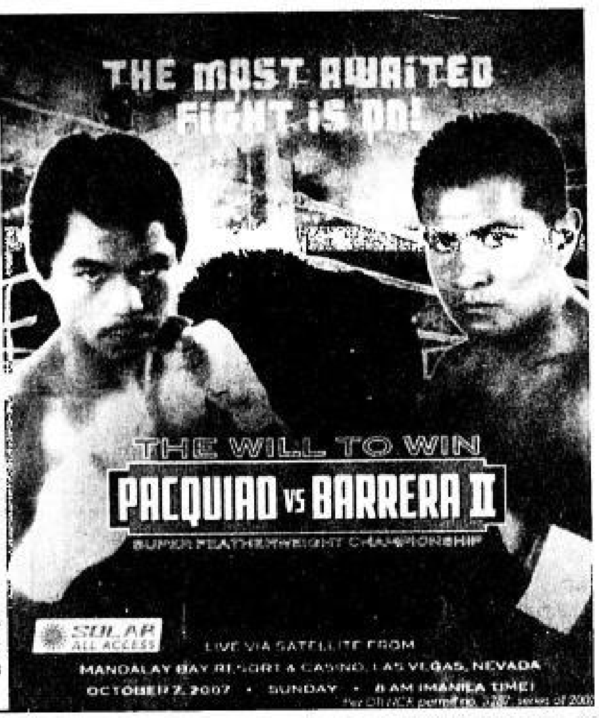

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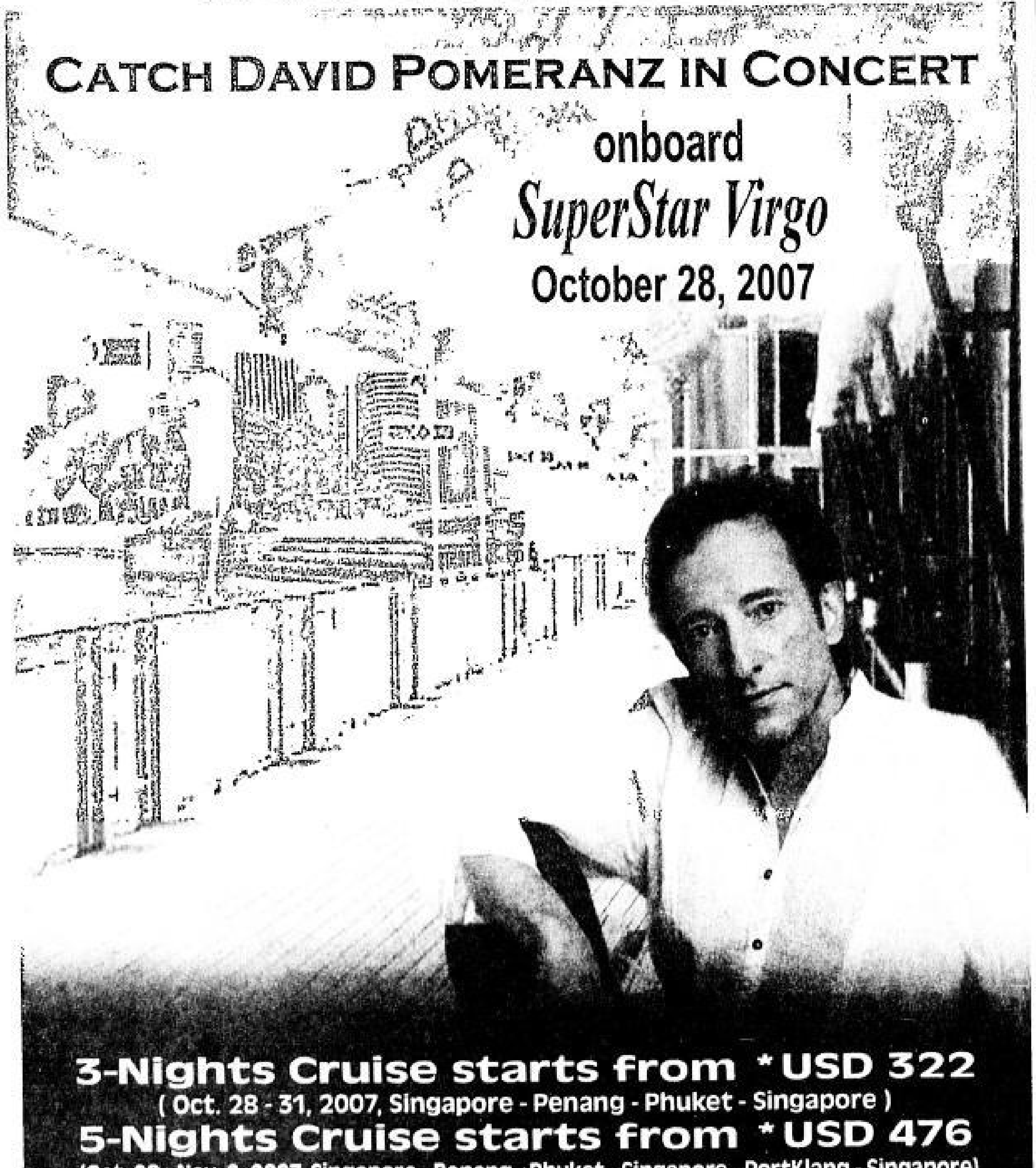

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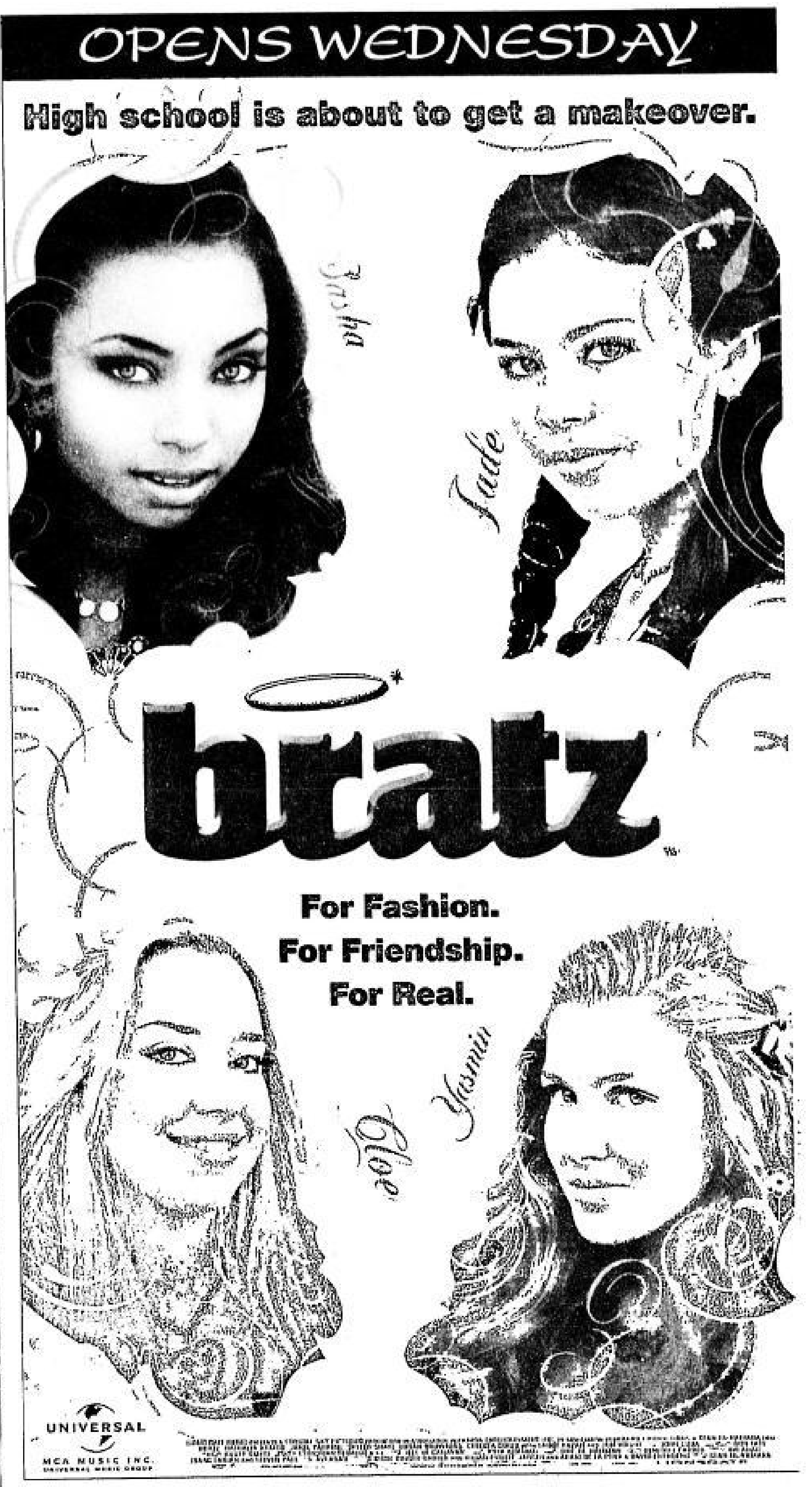

OPENS WEDNESDAY
High school is about to get a makeover.
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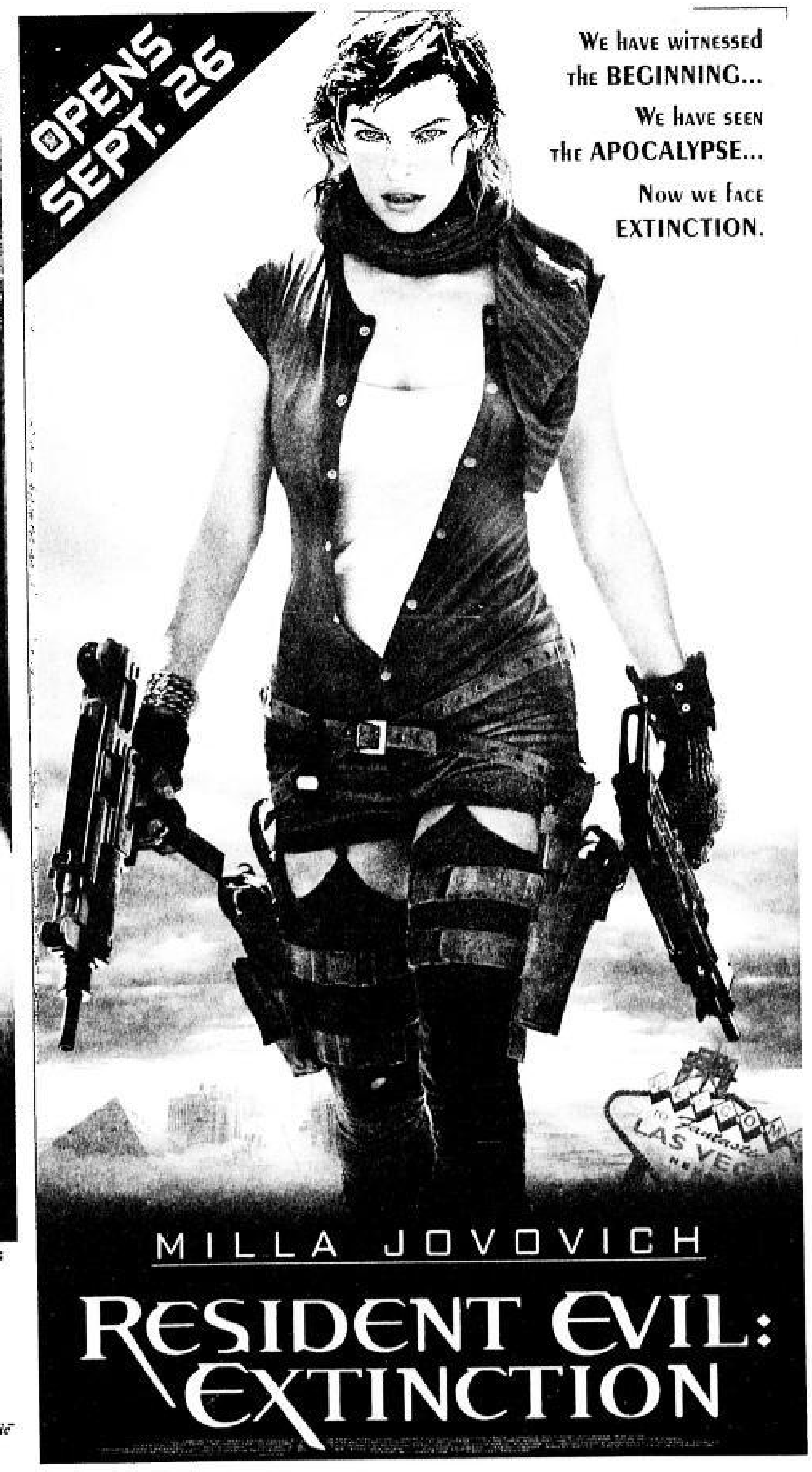


OPENS SEPT. 26
WE HAVE WITNESSED THE BEGINNING...
WE HAVE SEEN THE APOCALYPSE...
NOW WE FACE EXTINCTION.
MILLA JOVOVICH
RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION

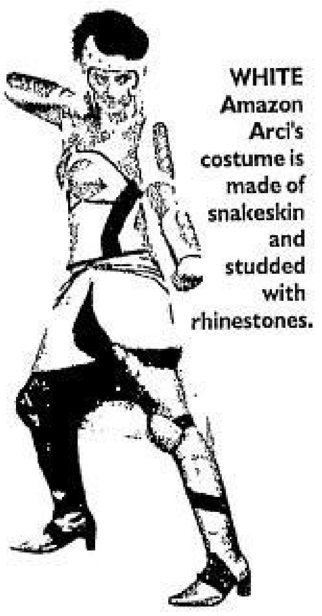
United colors of 'Zaido'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rem Zamora

METAL Heroes trio, from L, Marky Cielo, Dennis Trillo and Aljur Abrenica.

IF YOU ASK COSTUME DEsigner Bill Gustilo, dressing up the stars of the new Kapuso adventure series "Zaido" was kid stuff.

"I thought of toys," Gustilo told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I saw the boys as action figures and the girls as dolls."



WHITE Amazon Arci's costume is made of snakeskin and studded with rhinestones.

With fellow designer Noel Flores, Gustilo stuck to a simple design philosophy: "Think kids."

He explained: "I asked myself: If I were a child, what toys would I like to play with?"

Thus, he made sure that his designs for the female stars and villains hewed closely with Flores' costumes for the three Metal Heroes—portrayed by Dennis Trillo, Marky Cielo and Aljur Abrenica.

"We wanted a coherent look: futuristic, science fiction," Gustilo said.

Flores' Galactic Force Academy costumes for the three boys are heavily influenced by "Star Trek."

Redynn Alba, "Zaido" program manager, said that, although GMA 7 acquired the rights for the 1980s series "Shaider" from Japanese company Toei, the local network was allowed to tweak not only the story, but the costumes and the overall look as well.

PHOTOG shoots Jay Manalo in his modern Kagemusha costume as the baddie Drigo.

IAN DE LEON, playing a good-guy general, looks sharp in character.

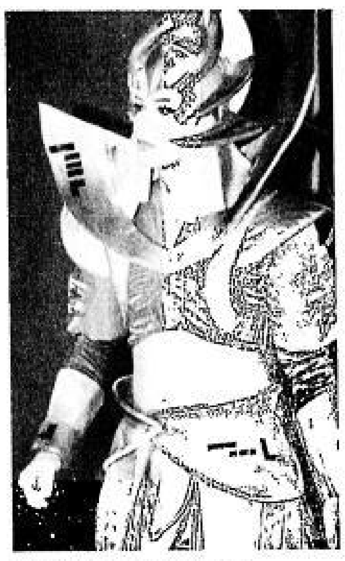
For example, Kris Bernal's ingénue Amy wears a nautical outfit like the one worn by "Shaider" heroine Annie, but, "We did away with the long sleeves and made it more youthful," said Gustilo.

Baddie Jay Manalo's Drigo looks like a modernized Kagemusha in black and red. Cross-dressing cohort Paolo Ballesteros' Ida is a vision in violet straight from "Voltes V."

The female villains, dubbed Amazonas, are color-coded: black, orange, pink and white. "I wanted the girls to look like barbarians, but in candy colors," Gustilo explained. He also made use of snakeskin, spandex, rubber and fake leather, "for costumes that jump out of the screen."

A LAST touch-up for Orange Amazon Vaness del Moral

WHITE Amazon Arci Muñoz prepares for her close-up.



PURPLE passion: Paolo Ballesteros strikes a pose as cross-dressing villain Ida.

Home 'mental hospitals' on 'I-Witness'

THE HOMEMADE SOLUTIONS FAMILIES are forced to employ in the face of complex mental problems are explored in the "I-Witness" documentary titled "Gapos," airing late tonight on GMA-7.

Little "mental hospitals" inside homes in remote provinces are visited by Kara David.

In one province in the Visayas, Kara meets six different "patients," among them, Teng, who has been tied up the longest. He has been chained around the waist for more than 12 years because of his history of violence.

Another patient is Geraldine, who is allowed to take care of her nine younger siblings. But when she suffers an attack, she, too, must be tied up.

KARA David speaks to one of her subjects.

CLICK!

Great icons on Discovery

Mandela, Ali, Castro. These men have shaped history and inspired millions.

Discovery Channel's new series, "The Complete," takes a unique approach to telling the stories of some of the greatest leaders of our time through the eyes of ordinary people.

The series airs starting tonight until Sept. 19 at 9 p.m.

The first episode takes viewers into the life of Nelson Madela, an anti-apartheid activist who was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released after 27 years and became South Africa's first democratically elected president.

Sexbomb search on GMA

Five Sexbomb Girls hopefuls—Michelle Mercado, Mizuki Konno, Chona Guzman, Johanne Fagel and Veronica Bengco—will vie for the title Sexbomb Wannabe (Sexbomb Girls in training) in grand finals of "Baile! Sis Search for the Next Bomb" today on GMA 7.

The winner will receive P20,000 and other opportunities, including a management contract under Joy Cancio's Focus E.

She will also join the back-up dancers of Sexbomb Rochelle in the mall tours for her "Baile" album.

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DAY WATCH 12:20 / 4:55 / 9:40
Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
1408 2:30 / 7:10
UNDERDOG 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40
I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
NANCY DREW 2:55 / 7:30
DISTURBIA 12:10 / 4:50 / 9:30
A LOVE STORY 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
THE BRAVE ONE 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00
AliMALL CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
ROUGE ASSASSIN 12:10 / 2:55 / 5:30 / 8:05
I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15
THE BRAVE ONE 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00
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Too much like that other wedding film

By Jayson B. Brizuela
Contributor

DEBRALIZ, Maja Salvador and Ryan Agoncillo in "My Kuya's Wedding"

A WORD OF CAUTION TO THOSE who have yet to catch "My Kuya's Wedding" (Regal Films): Expect nothing more than entertainment.

Topbilling Ryan Agoncillo, Maja Salvador and helmed by Toppel Lee, the movie—if the title didn't help you see it coming—is a rehash of Hollywood's well-loved "My Best Friend's Wedding."

Ryan stars as Jeff, doting *kuya* to Maja's clingy Kat. Dealing with the loss of their father as children, and growing up in a household that struggles to make ends meet, Jeff and Kat develop a very strong bond.

The death of their mother years later seals this bond. It also sets the stage for the movie's premise: A young girl on the verge of "losing" the only family she's got tries to break up her big brother's forthcoming wedding.

In terms of acting, Maja is the star here. She turns out a passable, even laudable, performance.

Ryan also does well, especially in the first part, when he gets to show off his dramatic chops. He is convincing—both as a doting *kuya* and as a young man stepping into his father's shoes. In fact, Ryan gives the character more than it demands of him.

With so many similarities between "Kuya" and the Julia Roberts-Dermot Mulroney classic—down to distinct details, like the gay best friend, here played by an under-utilized IC Mendoza—it's easy to dismiss "Kuya" as yet another copycat.

It's worthwhile to note that, true to form, Regal tried to "improve" on the earlier material, with several sub-plots.

There's the budding romance between Kat and future brother-in-law Aris, a reality show evictee played by Jason Abalos. Although an obvious effort to build up a new love team, this is a welcome distraction from the occasionally dragging sequences.

There's also bride-to-be Heidi's (Pauleen Luna) back story: Her first attempt to tie the knot ended in disaster—recalling yet another Julia Roberts hit, "Runaway Bride."

Additional characters

Additional characters help prop up the film: Dick Israel as the disapproving father of the bride; Ethel Booba as the future mother-in-law; Janus Del Prado and Ryan Yllana as the wrestling-loving future brothers-in-law. Sadly, their limited screen exposure undermine their effectiveness.

The most obvious deviation from "Best Friend," of course, is the sister. But this is also the movie's problem. Credit goes to the filmmakers for heading in the family-friendly direction, but everyone knows that a brother-sister story isn't nearly as box office-friendly as a romantic coupling.

"Kuya" tries to offset this weakness with Pauleen's character, the would-be-bride and object of Kat's machinations. Unfortunately, Pauleen's performance is uninspired and falls short of providing the requisite romantic tension. Either that, or her character was really meant to take a back seat.

It might have been interesting if the movie had focused on the sister/sister-in-law conflict. Then again, that might have made "Kuya" a rehash of another Hollywood hit, "Monster-in-Law." Any more of rehashing, and we may just decide to ditch weddings like this altogether.

Praise, complaint for kiddie reality series

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO—A CBS reality series in which youngsters run their own town has prompted complaints from one of the children's parents, and may have skirted New Mexico's child-protection laws.

"Kid Nation," slated to premiere Sept. 19, was filmed over 40 days during April and May in a movie-set town in the high desert just south of Santa Fe.

While parents and children made available by CBS praised the production as safe, well-supervised and a learning experience, one mother has told authorities the conditions warrant an abuse investigation.

Janis Miles of Fayetteville, Georgia, said in a letter that her 12-year-old daughter, Divad Miles, was spattered on her face with grease while cooking potatoes on a wood stove, and that four other children required medical attention after they accidentally drank bleach.

Her daughter also had a rash that had caused scarring, and sunburn on her face and hands, Miles wrote.

DID YOU KNOW...

Miles declined to talk to a reporter, referring calls to CBS.

Tom Forman, the show's executive producer, confirmed the grease-spattering and bleach-sipping incidents, but called them the kinds of accidents that can happen "in any kitchen, in any school, in any home, in any camp" and said that the children immediately got medical attention.

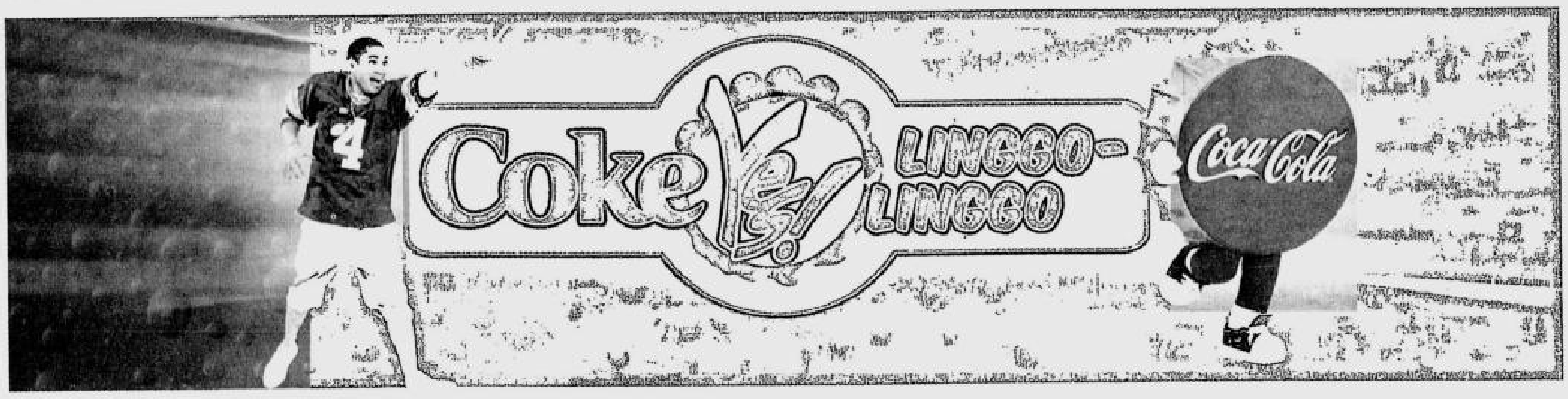
The children in the show, ages 8-15, hauled water, prepared meals, elected a government and passed laws.

"The whole concept of the show is 40 kids who build a world of their own," Forman said.

The children are to be paid $5,000 apiece when the series airs, and one child per episode was awarded a solid-gold star by the town's elected government worth $20,000, Forman said.

"The series was filmed responsibly and within all applicable laws in the state of New Mexico at the time of the production," CBS said in a statement. *AP*

EXCLUSIVE THIS WEEK!



GANG, GIVEN "YES" SIGNAL TO RUN AFTER SCOOTERS!

What do you do when you've grown tired of running, sprinting and chasing after all the Yes! crowns on foot? Well, you run faster and harder after an SK-125 SCOOTER!

Take it from the Yes-Yes-Yo Gang. For the past few weeks, they have been giving their trusty slippers, good ol' rubber shoes and maybe even their killer stilettos one hell of a workout for a chance to say Yes! to cellphones, iPod Nanos, PSPs and just recently, MacBooks.

But with **Coke, Sprite** and **Royal 8 oz.** and **12 oz.** calling out from every sari-sari store, pushing everyone to go after great prizes like the scooters on the loose this week, looks like no pair of sneakers will be getting that much-needed rest anytime soon.

"I train everyday by sprinting from one *sari-sari* store to another in our street! So I can run from my bedroom in the morning and be the first face that *Manang* Shirley sees every day! I can't be taking a walk in the park if I want to have each and every one of her store's Coke bottles all to myself. After all, what's at stake this week is the SK-125 SCOOTER!" says one Yes! member while trying to catch his breath in between sentences.

"It's one of the most versatile scooters around, especially if you live in a city where traffic is at its worst almost half the time," he says, still panting. "With the SK-125 scooter, I will be able to weave through traffic effortlessly. Plus it can do more than 60 km. on a single liter of fuel, so I can get to more, if not ALL the *sari-sari* stores here in our *baranggay* in time to find the next winning Yes! message ahead of everyone else!" he continues.

"I will do everything for that scooter and of course, that winning Yes! message. Even it if means setting a new record. Yes! I plan to run to each and every *sari-sari* store in this city and drink as much ice-cold Coke as possible in the shortest possible time," the Yes! athlete declares, then suddenly runs off to resume his hunt.

Indeed, this type of frenzy, driven by an intense "just say Yes!" behavior, is what has taken over the country these past few weeks. And in no time, with people discovering interesting ways of drinking more Coke and bagging that winning Yes! crown, impressive records are really just waiting to be set. •

YES! YOU WIN THIS SK-125 SCOOTER IF THE MESSAGE UNDER YOUR CROWN IS:

YES, MARARATING MO 'YUN!

CHECK YOUR CROWN NOW!

YOU MAY ALREADY BE A WINNER!

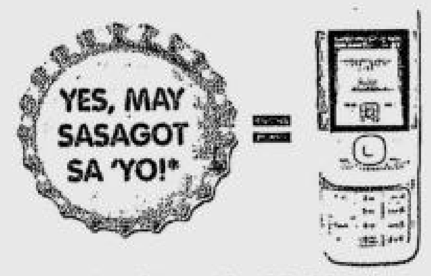
Is it your chance to say Yes! to an SK-125 SCOOTER this week? With "Buhay Coke, Yes, Linggo-Linggo," if the message under your Coke crown is "**YES, MARARATING MO 'YUN!**" go ahead, grab your chance to say Yes! to a SCOOTER right now!

But if non-winning crowns are all you've got at the moment, just keep those YESes and never ever say no! Every week, there is a different winning Yes! message, because every week there is a different prize up for grabs. Who knows, one of your crowns might make you say Yes! next week!

Still want to run faster and harder after the SK-125 SCOOTER this week? So, what's stopping you? Just buy any **Coke, Sprite, Royal 8oz.** and **12oz.** and look under the crown for the Yes! message. If it matches the winning message on this page and on the daily 5:30pm announcements on GMA and ABS-CBN, then Yes! you're a winner!

And Yes! You can also win instantly! Millions of Jollibee Meals (1-pc. Chickenjoy Meal, Jollibee Spaghetti Meal or Regular Yum Meal) to be given away under the crown. •

NEVER MISS A YES! WEEK



Week 1 (Aug. 19 - 25, 2007)

YES, PAKINGGAN MO NA 'NO!*
=

Week 2 (Aug. 26 - Sept. 1, 2007)

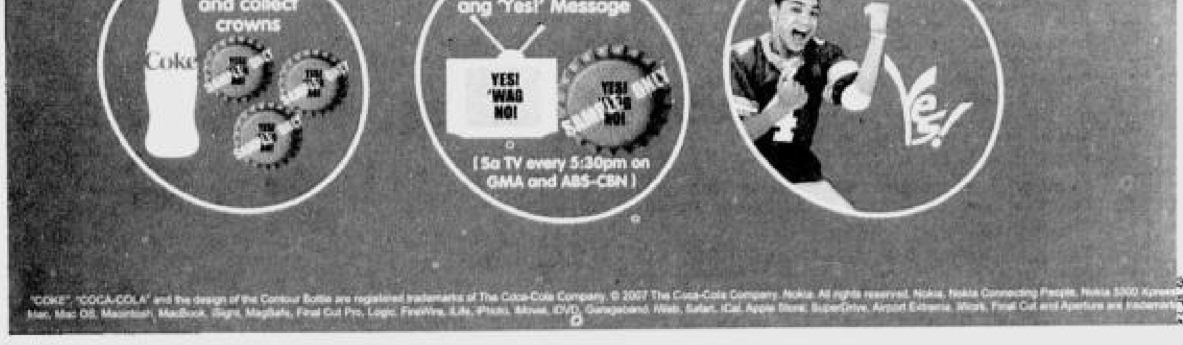
YES, KAHIT SAAN DAPAT GAME!*
=

Week 3 (Sept. 2 - 8, 2007)

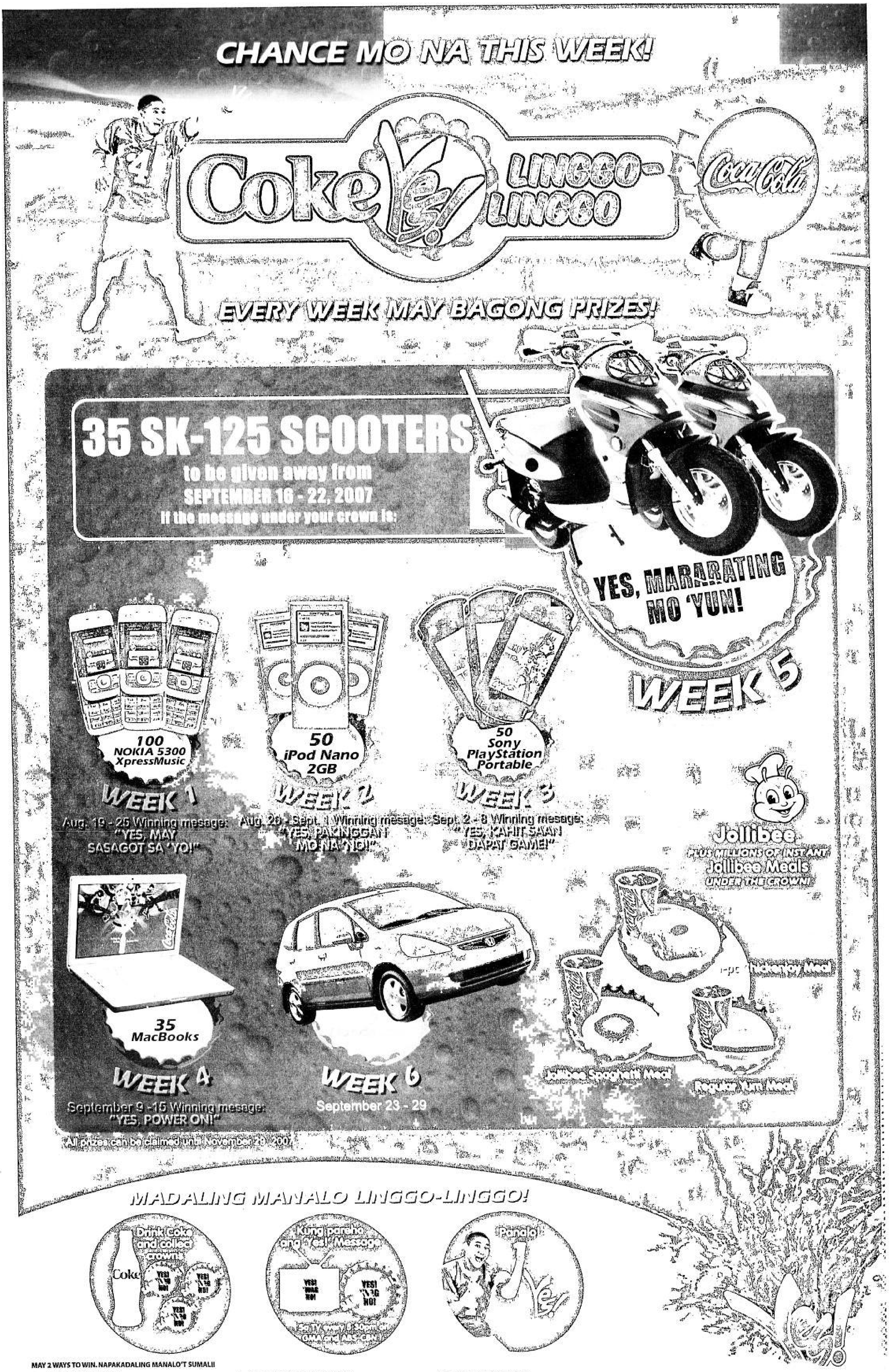
YES, POWER ON!*
=

Week 4 (Sept. 9 - 15, 2007)

*Crown look may vary.
All winning crowns have security markings and are subject to verification and authentication by Coca-Cola representatives.
All prizes can be claimed until November 29, 2007


Drink Coke and collect crowns
Coke
Kung pareho ang 'Yes!' Message
YES! 'WAG NO!
(Sa TV every 5:30pm on GMA and ABS-CBN)
Panalo!
Yes!

Iba-iba ang prizes weekly! Sali na!



CHANCE MO NA THIS WEEK!

Coke Yes! LINGGO-LINGGO

EVERY WEEK MAY BAGONG PRIZES!

35 SK-125 SCOOTERS

to be given away from
SEPTEMBER 16 - 22, 2007
If the message under your crown is:

"YES, MARARATING MO 'YUN!"

WEEK 5

100 NOKIA 5300 XpressMusic
WEEK 1
Aug. 19 - 25 Winning mesage:
"YES, MAY SASAGOT SA 'YO!"

50 iPod Nano 2GB
WEEK 2
Aug. 26 - Sept. 1 Winning mesage:
"YES, PAKINGGAN MO NA 'NO!"

50 Sony PlayStation Portable
WEEK 3
Sept. 2 - 8 Winning mesage:
"YES, KAHIT SAAN DAPAT GAME!"

Jollibee
PLUS MILLIONS OF INSTANT Jollibee Meals UNDER THE CROWN!

1-pc Chickenjoy Meal
Jollibee Spaghetti Meal
Regular Yum Meal

35 MacBooks
WEEK 4
September 9 - 15 Winning mesage:
"YES, POWER ON!"

WEEK 6
September 23 - 29

All prizes can be claimed until November 29, 2007

MADALING MANALO LINGGO-LINGGO!

Drink Coke and collect crowns
Coke
YES!
Kung pareho ang 'Yes!' Message
Sa TV every 5:30pm on GMA and ABS-CBN
Panalo!
Yes!

MAY 2 WAYS TO WIN. NAPAKADALING MANALO'T SUMALI!

A. WEEKLY MAJOR PRIZES

1. Buy any participating Coke products (Coke, Sprite or Royal 8oz or 12oz) with specially-marked 'Yes!' Crowns.
2. Look under the crown to see the 'Yes!' Message.
3. Watch for the announcements of the winning 'Yes!' Message of the week on GMA and ABS-CBN at 5:30pm daily, and on the Philippine Daily Inquirer & Inquirer Libre every Monday.
4. If the winning 'Yes!' Message of the week matches the message under the crown, consumer wins the corresponding weekly prize.
5. For instructions on how to claim the major weekly prizes, call the Coca-Cola Hotlines:

GMA	813-2653 / (813- COKE)
Provincial Areas	1-800-1-888 2653 / (1-800-1-888-COKE)

B. INSTANT JOLLIBEE FOOD PRIZES

1. Buy any participating Coke products (Coke, Sprite or Royal 8oz or 12oz) with specially-marked 'Yes!' Crowns, for a chance to win Jollibee food items instantly.
2. Look for the 'Yes!' Message under the crown.
3. If the Jollibee instant win message is under the crown, consumer wins the corresponding prize.
4. Winning crowns may be presented for verification and prizes may be claimed at any Jollibee outlet nationwide.

This is a nationwide promotion.
All prizes over P10,000 are tax free.
All winning crowns have security markings and are subject to verification and authentication by Coca-Cola representatives.
Employees of TCCEC, CCBP, Jollibee Foods Corporation, their advertising agencies, BFAD and their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity and affinity as well as employees of TCCEC's and CCBP's subsidiaries, affiliates and service providers are disqualified from joining this promotion. Third party suppliers and their employees are also disqualified.
Decisions made by Coca-Cola are final.

Promo period is from August 19 to September 29, 2007.
Deadline of claiming prizes is on November 29, 2007.
*Photo may vary from actual unit.

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0578 series of 2007.

Coca-Cola
RIDE TO FAME
Yes! to your dreams
The search for the Next Total Performer continues every SUNDAY after SOP on GMA
GMA
Coca-Cola
RIDE TO FAME
Yes!

www.igma.tv/ridetofame
ext COKE YES to 4627

Buhay Coke Buksan Mo

"COCA-COLA", "COKE", the design of the Contour Bottle and "Buhay COKE, Buksan Mo" are trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company. © 2007 The Coca-Cola Company.

ONE BUS. EIGHT PASSENGERS LEFT.
ONE OF THEM IS
THE NEXT BIG THING.

Sure, they can sing. By all means, they can dance. And oh, they can write beautiful lyrics, too.

But can they do all these while captivating and astounding the audience? After all, it takes more than just plain singing, dancing and songwriting to be considered a total performer.

Well, someone on the bus right now can and is definitely on the fast lane to stardom. And it's up to us to spot that rising star.

So take a closer look at the remaining eight passengers and realize who has that inspiring and melodic voice, that soulful vibe, that magnetic energy and determination, that unmistakable charm that "just say Yes!" attitude. . . that superstar glow.

Make sure you show your support so he or she reaches the final stop. Who knows, you may even win an iPod along the way.

HOSTED BY:
KAREL & DREW

DARYL
One rockin' performer.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>DARYL

AL
The jack of all musical surprises.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>AL

CHESKA
That oomph factor melodified.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>CHESKA

LEX
Genre-defying music icon
Text COKE<space>YES<space>LEX

AVA
The stage's "it" girl.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>AVA

QWYNCY
Her nickname: "Performance Level"
Text COKE<space>YES<space>QWYNCY

CARL
Small guy, massive appeal.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>CARL

GIO
All-around voice box.
Text COKE<space>YES<space>GIO

SEND TO 367 FOR SMART AND TALK N TEXT SUBSCRIBERS AND TO 2344 FOR GLOBE, TOUCH MOBILE AND SUN SUBSCRIBERS. STANDARD RATES APPLY. VOTING IS OPEN UNTIL 3PM ONLY, TODAY. WATCH COCA-COLA RIDE TO FAME: YES TO YOUR DREAMS EVERY SUNDAYS AFTER SOP AT GMA.

Per DOH-BFAD Permit Number 0945 Series of 2007

Saya ng family bonding
₱22 Coke Litro
Bonding sa Buhay. Coke Buksan Mo™
Coca-Cola®